Cocaine: Superdrug hits the supermarket by Fiona Lewis

Vesco: Nixon's legacy in Central America by Steve Diamond

Congress masters the politics of spite by Robert Shrum

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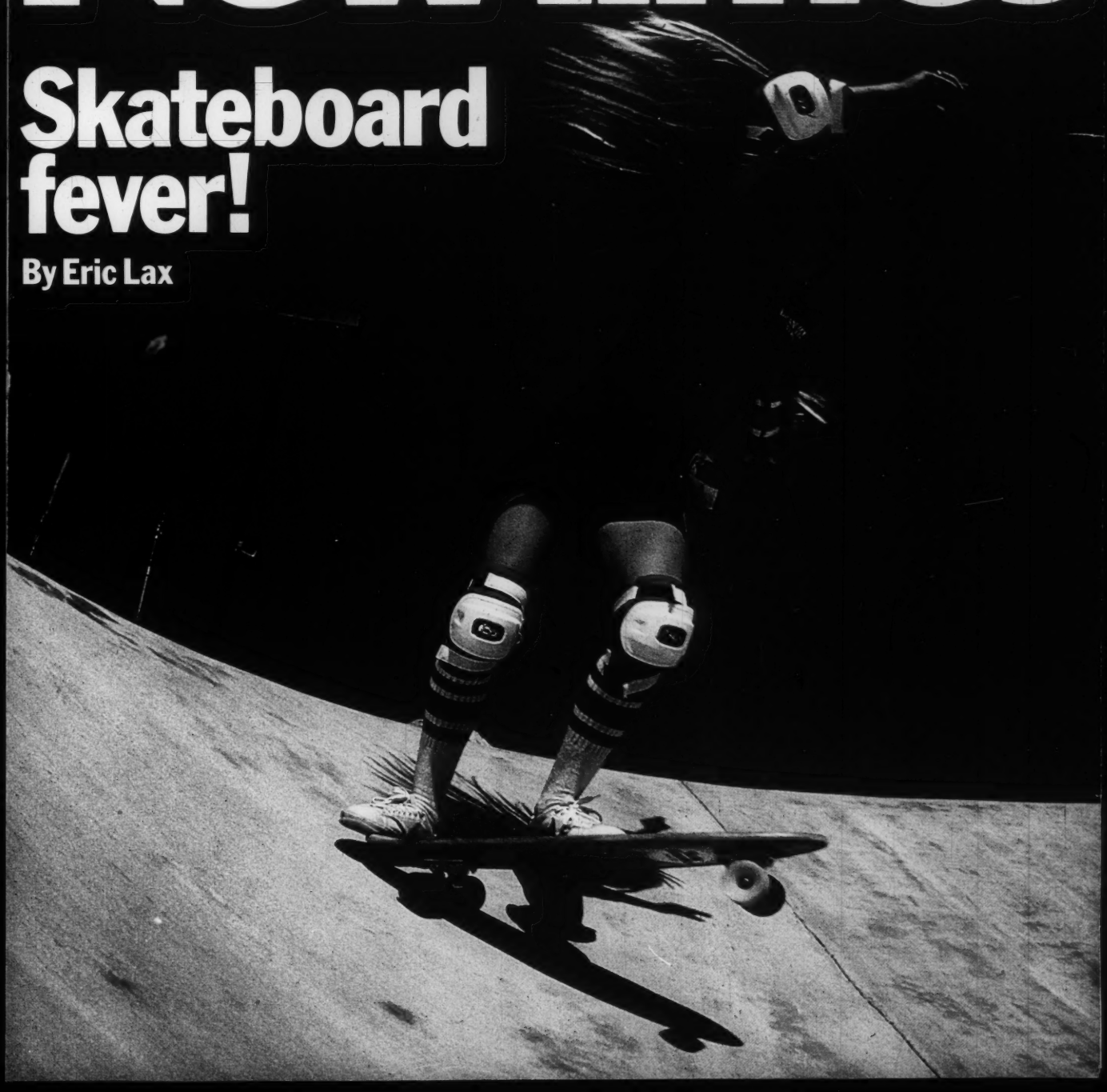

Skateboard fever!

By Eric Lax

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Kings & 100's

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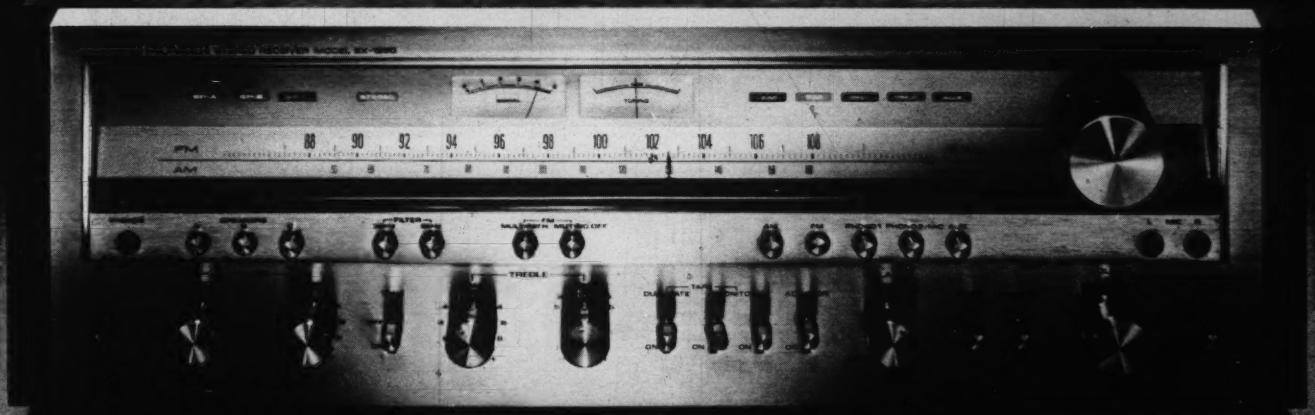

THE SX1250.

At Pioneer high fidelity, we've always made it a habit to try and introduce incredibly refined high fidelity components long before our competition.

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FIAT

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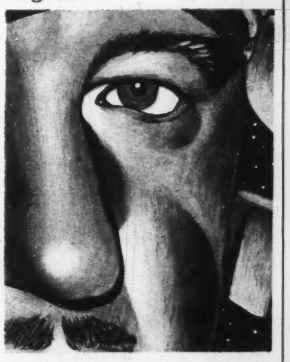
JULY 22, 1977
VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2

New Times

The pirate who would be king

How much does a banana republic go for these days? For Robert Vesco, the price is rising dramatically —and so is the heat.
By Stephen Diamond
Page 23



Superdrug hits the supermarket

Snowblind in suburbia

Coke goes middle-class.
By Albert Goldman
Page 35

Cocaine ladies

Coke made God and marriage and homesick blues seem . . . silly. Coke, Terri decided, was all right. So was the scam Lenny had planned—a scam that, if everything went well, would put both of them up in Bel Aire.
By Fiona Lewis with John Lombardi
Page 39

Still looking for Jimmy

Will the real Mr. Jackson, uh, Rockefeller, no, Roosevelt, pardon, Nixon . . . LBJ? Hell, Jimmy, would ya please stand up?
By Arnon Mishkin and Paul Slansky
Page 52

Skateboard fever

In the last two years, skateboarding has steamrolled its way to becoming a multi-million-dollar sport, replete with its own set of pros, its own parks, even its own jargon. As the young men behind it all are quick to point out, it's a cherry little business.
By Eric Lax
Page 55

COVER
PHOTOGRAPH BY WARREN BOLSTER

Party Lines
On the Hill, it's the politics of backlash.
By Robert Shrum
Page 4

Dollar Signs
Carter's economic war against free trade.
By A. Gallatin
Page 6

Letters Page 10

The Insider Page 15

REVIEWS

Books: Smartest robots in our solar system: you and I
Carl Sagan thinks about man's mind.
By Geoffrey Wolff
Page 64

Movies: Four strikes and a solid hit
Stunts has real thrills, which is more than you can say for *Exorcist II* et al.
By Richard Corliss
Page 66

Music: Going through changes with Jimmy Rowles
The pianist's pianist.
By Frank Conroy
Page 68

Final Tribute
Where have all the Irish gone?
By David Murray
Page 72

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The politics of spite

In the U.S. Congress, June was the cruelest month, as a spirit of revenge against the past swept through the House and the Senate. The votes on Vietnam were typical. In the Senate, only two members, Bill Hathaway of Maine and George McGovern, opposed a ban on negotiating possible reconstruction aid. And both houses approved a requirement that the United States subtract from its international bank contributions a sum equal to any development loans those banks grant to Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

Congress also took out its Vietnam revenge on draft resisters and broken servicemen, denying the Administration the funds necessary to complete the Carter amnesty program, as well as withholding future veterans' benefits from 175,000 men, whose less than honorable discharges could be upgraded under another Carter proposal. Many of the men affected fought in the front lines of the war; some had two tours of duty in Indochina and many received the purple heart. Often they were discharged because of the drug habits they had picked up in the battle zones. Others were victims of trumped up charges for expressing unpopular political opinions, e.g., questioning the war itself.

If we are to pick the bones of the past, then the House and Senate might more justly block the lavish congressional pensions of all members who less than honorably discharged their own constitutional duties during the Vietnam period, when the only flak they had to fear was political. Instead, they are acting as though punishing the resisters and victims of the war somehow will prove that it was a worthy business after all.

Thus Senator Robert Dole, once Nixon's loudest mouthpiece for the war, recently spoke vigorously against international bank loans to replace the schools, roads, villages and irrigation systems that American B-52s bombed away in the process of destroying Vietnam in order to save it. Dole, who should never mention the word Vietnam outside a confessional, argued that "having left enough blood [there], let's don't start sending cash to follow the blood." The senator might prefer to forget who voted for the bloodletting. He would surely prefer that the *rest* of us forget.

The twisted reaction of Dole and others to the Vietnam fiasco is pathetic, but the reactionaries retain great power all the same in the psychic aftershock of a lost war, their spite and their fear today dominating congressional foreign policymaking. The Senate has overwhelmingly resolved, for instance, that the Castro government in Cuba should not be recognized, even though it has survived 16 years of U. S. hostility and assassination plots. The Congress also has ruled out all foreign aid to the Marxist regimes in Mozambique and Angola, whose cooperation is critical to any Rhodesian settlement. As read on Capitol Hill, the lesson of Vietnam seems to be that we should relive it. By repeating in Africa its knee-jerk anti-communism, Congress is acting as if the reflex had been vindicated in Southeast Asia.

That same reflex could also trip the country into another Vietnam (or for that matter, another Korea) in South Korea. During its splurge of June jingoism, the Senate, led by Minority Leader Howard Baker, turned aside a proposed endorsement of President Carter's troop withdrawal from that country.

Majority Leader Robert Byrd can be just as hard-line as his Republican counterpart. At a June 8 White House breakfast, he warned the President that Senate ratification of a Panama Canal treaty would be very, very tough. Byrd himself had doubts about giving away too many American "rights" in the Canal Zone. Afterward, a Carter adviser commented acidly: "The alternative to a treaty is a war. Maybe the rhetorical generals in Congress should fight this one themselves."

Byrd also pointed with alarm to a Soviet weapons build-up, and he is hardly alone. With aggressive insecurity fed by defeat in Vietnam, the Congress is rushing into a new arms race. The House has approved the neutron bomb, the ultimate weapon of a dehumanized capitalism; it will kill people but leave the real property standing. Assuming presently scheduled developments in U. S. missile warheads and guidance systems by the early 1980s, an American attack could knock out 80 percent of the Soviet Union's land-based strategic forces. That threat in turn could understandably pressure the Russians to strike first in a crisis. Racing to be oversafe in nuclear forces could mean being very sorry.

Henry Kissinger repeatedly pre-

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN COLLIER/BLACK STAR

Weathermen: A decade later, Congress is voting against the past

dicted a right-wing reaction to defeat in Vietnam. But in fact the reactionaries include senators and representatives from across the ideological spectrum. Moderate Republican Lowell Weicker, hero of the Watergate Committee, went straight down the jingoistic line this June. Loquacious liberal Frank Church, who wore his antiwar credentials proudly through his '76 presidential campaign, voted against the international bank loans to Vietnam. Delaware's Joe Biden, who as a peace candidate became the youngest senator at 30, quietly cast his vote against funding the Carter amnesty program. Biden himself escaped being drafted during the Vietnam years because he became a husband and father before his law school deferment expired in 1968. (Only 26 sons of congressmen fought in Indochina. The single member of Congress who is a Vietnam ground-combat veteran, Pennsylvania Representative John Murtha, not only voted, but pleaded on the House floor for the amnesty funding.)

Viewing what had been wrought by liberals, moderates and conservatives alike, George McGovern told the Senate that, although he had just returned from a weekend trip with his three grandsons to Disneyworld, he had the eerie feeling he was still there. "The Mad Hatter," he said, seemed to be running Congress. But irrational policy now makes sensible politics, at least in the conventional view from Capitol Hill. Winding up the arguments against amnesty during the Senate debate, South Carolina's Fritz Hollings proudly announced: "We are prepared to vote both as a matter of conscience and constituency."

The former is really the afterthought to the latter in many legislative minds. The congressional reactionaries are not just those entangled in their Vietnam guilts and cold war fears. Others in the Senate and the House who opposed the Vietnam disaster now are feeling—and following—the public backlash. And Vietnam is just the tip of that backlash.

The long-haired protesters of the 1960s and early '70s challenged more than the Indochina policy of two presidents, most politicians and their own parents. It was not a long leap of consciousness from protesting the defoliation of Asian forests to demonstrating against the pollution of the American environment, from civil rights to women's rights to gay rights. Now the postwar, post-sixties backlash is slashing along the same wider arc. The nation is retreating defensively to a politics of spite against all the dissent, demands and new lifestyles of the past decade.

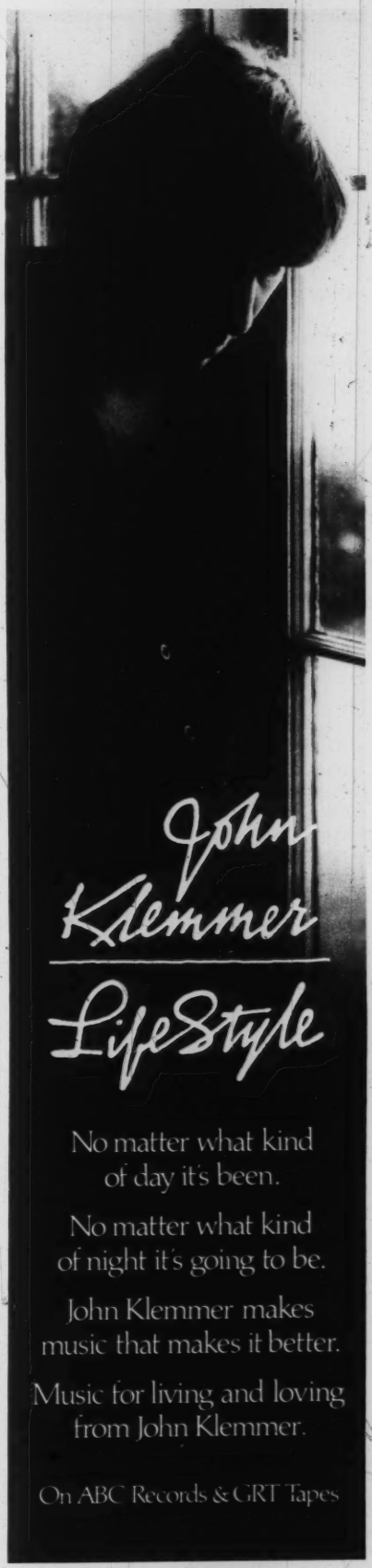
Americans increasingly resist sacrifices for racial equality, so the House has vetoed funds for affirmative action in education and employment, and both branches have slashed the appropriation for integrating schools. Under pressure from the anti-abortion lobby, an unrepresentative House of 417 men and 18 women has decided that poor women can no longer collect Medicaid for abortions. Many of the same legislators, notes Illinois Representative Marty Russo, "who staunchly defend these youngsters' right to life will shortly turn around and vote against social welfare programs" to improve the quality of their lives once they are born. The backlash of '77 has even hit the environmental movement, the one cause that seemed to be almost politically akin to motherhood. In May, the House voted to postpone and downgrade the auto emission standards.

Gay rights is perhaps the clearest example of the connection between the public backlash and the congressional reaction. After Dade County conformed its laws to a literal interpretation of the Old Testament (I wonder if Anita Bryant eats pork), the Congress rushed to join in. The new housing bill will overturn the recent regulation permitting homosexual couples to live in public housing. And recently the House hooted through a proposal by Representative Larry McDonald, a John Birch society member, prohibiting federal legal aid to contest violations of "so-called gay rights."

Across the board, Congress has reinforced, not tempered, the reactionary spirit, which so many of its members instinctively share. More and more of them seem to be political clones of Ted Baxter: good faces, good hairstyles, good modulation—and small minds.

If much of the nation would like to return to a simpler day when grass meant lawn, gay meant cheerful and the U.S. won all its wars—well, the present Congress can hardly be counted on to hinder the general retreat. There is one political leader who might, however, and that is the still very popular President of the United States.

To those of us who have suspected Jimmy Carter to be little more than a political blotter, his decision to cancel the B-1 bomber comes as an encouraging sign. The B-1 debate had been raging for eight years, and the bomber had become the central symbol of whether or not the military-industrial complex simply could have anything it wants. By standing up to the fierce lobbying of the defense contractors, the unions and the Pentagon itself, and saying that it could *not*, the President provided a welcome first break in the reactionary tide now sweeping Congress and country. If he keeps it up, born-again Jimmy Carter may yet rescue America from the politics of spite. ●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Dollars Signs/By A. Gallatin

Carter's economic war against free trade

Before the election, Carter was a master at straddling both sides of controversial economic and political issues. As candidate, he often promised one thing, only to deliver either nothing or something quite different as President. True as this seems to be for health and welfare programs, energy legislation and Mideast strategy, perhaps it is even truer for American world trade policy.

Candidate Carter, you will remember, put himself squarely in the free trade tradition of the Southern Democratic party and of Franklin Roosevelt. Indeed, his speeches suggested that he stood in a long line of Democratic presidents whose economic policies had aimed at integrating the American nation into an open world economy based on free trade. It was the Democratic party of Southern planters, from time immemorial, that lobbied in Congress for free trade with the rest of the world. Southerners naturally desired to export their traditional agricultural products, just as they wanted to import, without tariffs, the low-priced manufactured products that they could not produce at home. Historically, Southern Democratic free traders counterposed themselves to late 19th century economic nationalists whose policies were best represented by the Republican slogan, "Protection, Patriotism and Prosperity."

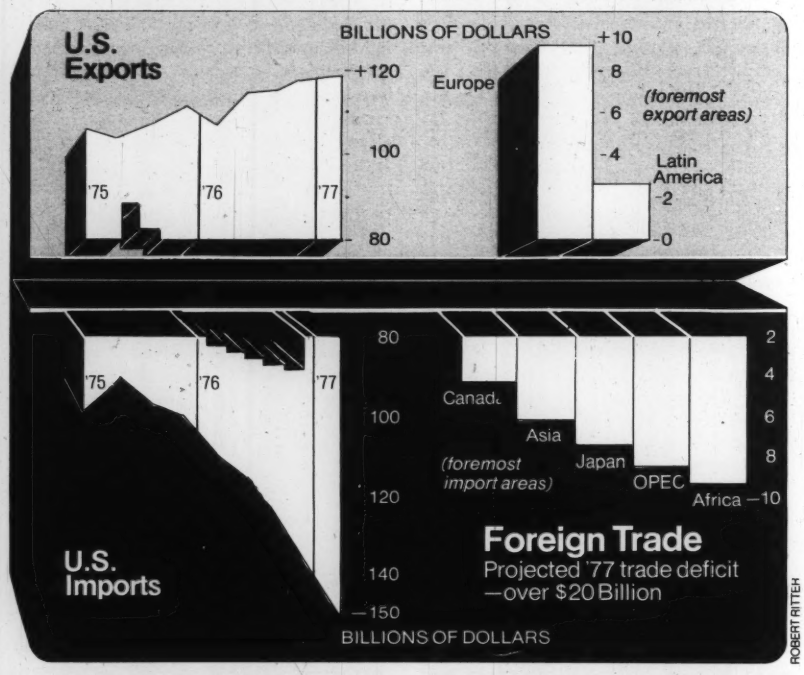
It was not implausible, therefore, for President Carter to cloak himself in the guise of Southern Democratic economic tradition. Not only was he a rich Southern farmer, but also, to many of his economic advisers and friends, liberal platitudes about opening up American markets to imports from impoverished third world countries came easily. We now observe, however, that Carter, Bert Lance (his closest economic adviser and friend) and Secretary of the Treasury Blumenthal are doing something quite different from what they are saying. It is Gallatin's first rule of American politics that if you want to know what a politician is up to, do not watch his mouth—watch his feet. Though Carter trade policy arrived amidst the sound and fury of free trade rhetoric, it is now being carried off on the silent cat's feet of quotas and trade restrictions.

Like Carter, most American politicians and government economists protest the importance of free trade in our world today—Americans could import the least expensive quality products from abroad, just as we could export, because of certain comparative advantages, our very best and most efficiently made goods and services. As a result of unrestricted economic exchange, everybody in the world would be more prosperous. That is the so-called "macroeconomic" theory of global free trade; it is based on the classical "microeconomic" theory of the division of labor among specialized producers and informed consumers in a neighborhood market. It is the very same theory of free trade which, when applied to a national market, accounts for the fact that Pennsylvania erects no tariffs against New York, that New York establishes no trade quotas against Connecticut. Because the United States is a continental free trade market, our nation is enabled to produce a bewildering diversity of relatively low-priced goods that ultimately account for our growing national prosperity. Free trade on a world scale, therefore, should not be difficult for Americans to appreciate.

But things have changed since President Carter was campaigning for President. The United States is now running the largest foreign trade deficit in its history. The first few months of this year suggest that the 1977 trade deficit may be as much as $20–25 billion, and we shall have to pay for the difference in hard currency, primarily American dollars. Nor does the problem end with payment.

American labor unions and American manufacturers, especially those in the textile, shoe, television, automobile and steel industries, observe that many products, imported from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Mexico and Brazil, to mention only a few large exporters to America, could have been produced in the United States by American workers, the revenues being paid to American workers and American stockholders, and not to their counterparts in foreign countries.

To be sure, latent protectionist



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Gin & Tonic: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin into highball glass over ice. Squeeze in wedge of lime. Fill glass with tonic.

Gin Screwdriver: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin and 3 ozs. orange juice. Stir in highball glass over ice cubes.

Tom Collins: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, juice of ½ lemon. Pour over ice in highball glass. Add sprinkle of powdered sugar. Fill with soda. Stir. Decorate with orange slice and cherry.

Gin Daiquiri: 2 ozs. Gordon's Gin, ½ oz. lime juice, ½ teaspoon sugar. Shake well with ice cubes. Strain and serve in cocktail glass.

Grapefruit Co ice cubes i juice. Ad

Ginac in hi Ad

P

Cranaby Street: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gi cranberry juice, ½ oz. lemon juice, cubes in highball glass. Add 2 drops and splash of soda. Stir.

TV Special: 1½ ozs. each Gordon's Gin ar orange juice over ice cubes in highball gla Fill glass with ginger ale. Stir.

White Lady: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, ½ oz. Cointreau and lemon juice, white of one e Shake well with ice cubes. Strain into co glass.

English Highball: 1 oz. each Gordon's G sweet vermouth, brandy, over ice cube highball glass. Fill with ginger ale. Sti lemon peel twist.

Maiden's Blush: 2 ozs. Gordon's Gi lemon juice, teaspoon each raspb jelly and powdered sugar. Shake over ice cubes in old-fashioned g with slice of lemon.

Lady Shake: 2 ozs. Gordon's Gin, 1 oz. Cointreau, ½ oz. lemon juice. Shake well over ice cubes. Strain and serve in cocktail glass.

Gin Bloody Mary: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, 3 ozs. tomato juice, juice of ⅓ lime wedge. Stir well over ice.

Hawaii: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin and 3 ozs. pineapple juice over ice cubes in highball glass. Add cherry.

Dry Martini: 4 or more parts Gordon's Gin, 1 part dry vermouth. Stir well in pitcher over ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass or over rocks. Option: Add lemon peel twist, olive, pearl onion.

Salty Dog: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin over ice cubes in old-fashioned glass. Fill with 3 ozs. grapefruit juice. Add dash of salt.

Old Fashioned: In old-fashioned glass, teaspoon sugar, one dash Angostura and pour on 1½ ozs. Gordon's of soda. Decorate with orange pineapple stick.

highball glass put 4 on sugar, 2 ozs. shaved ice. Stir 'til glass sprigs of mint. Serve

1 oz. grenadine, ke well with ice cocktail glass.

½ ozs. Gordon's Gin over ice cubes all glass. Fill with lemonade. Stir. n slice.

rdon's Gin, juice of a half ugar. Shake with cracked our glass. Add splash nge slice and cherry.

Gin into highball sliver of

Rickey: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, juice from ½ lime with rind into highball glass with ice cubes. Fill with soda water. Stir.

Daisy: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, teaspoon of grenadine, juice of ½ lemon, ½ teaspoon powdered sugar. Stir contents over ice cubes in highball glass. Add soda water to fill.

Gin Sour: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, juice of a half lemon, ½ teaspoon sugar. Shake with cracked ice. Strain into chilled sour glass. Add splash of soda. Garnish with orange slice and cherry.

Gimlet: 2 ozs. Gordon's Gin, 1 oz. sweetened lime juice. Stir well over ice. Strain into cocktail glass.

Between the Sheets: 1 oz. each Gordon's Gin, brandy, Cointreau. Shake well with ice cubes. Strain into cocktail glass.

Gordon's and Squirt: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin over ice in highball glass. Fill with Squirt® grapefruit soft drink.

Pink Gin: Sprinkle several drops of Angostura bitters into empty on-the-rocks glass. Swirl the bitters around the glass, remove excess. Add ice cubes and 2 ozs. Gordon's Gin.

Gin & Cola: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin in highball glass over ice cubes. Fill with cola. Add slice of lime.

Highball: 1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin into highball glass filled with ice. Twist in long sliver of lemon peel. Pour on ginger ale. Stir.

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attitudes of American labor unions and businessmen have always been present, especially during periods of unfair competition from abroad. There is nothing unnatural about Americans wanting to get paid the wages being paid to foreign workers who now produce the same goods that Americans would produce at higher prices. The difference *today* is in the way the leader of the Free World, the President of the United States, has responded—to wit, by dispatching his senior trade ambassador, Texas politico Robert Strauss, with a "special" message to some of our competitors. So far, Mr. Strauss, the former Democratic party national chairman, has required Taiwan, Japan and South Korea to restrict their exports to the U.S. of shoes, textiles, steel and electronic products. Indeed, Strauss required Japan to agree to one of the most severe American restraints imposed on our foreign trade since the Great Depression—a reduction by 40 percent in its export of television sets during the next three years.

Across the board, American trade negotiators are slowly closing the American market to some key imports from foreign producers, including third world countries trying desperately to penetrate the American market. Strauss now refers euphemistically to these recently imposed restrictions as "orderly marketing agreements." It is reasonable to expect that the Japanese, the Taiwanese, the South Koreans, the Brazilians, the Mexicans and other countries will, in one way or another, retaliate against this resurgence of American "neo-mercantilism." Already these same countries have their own restrictive tariffs and quotas, which often exclude American-made goods. As a matter of fact, the European Economic Community and Japan have pursued certain blatant protectionist policies during the postwar years that would cause most fair-minded men to conclude that, until recently, America was the only free market area in the world. And that is the point: Until recently, the U.S. led the world in the gradual postwar move toward freer trade. But protectionist impulses of politicians all over the world seem now to have overtaken our own national leaders. Perhaps the tide of economic nationalism is running too high to resist. Perhaps our new mercantilism is merely an understandable reaction to unfair competition from abroad. Whatever the cause, American consumers will now pay even higher prices for basic manufactured goods purchased in the United States. It is true that certain insulated American labor unions and some protected American manufacturing companies will benefit by the hidden subsidy of these new tariffs and quotas raised against import competition. But every other American, already struggling with little success against inflation and rising taxes, will pay for this special government subsidy to the privileged few.

The fundamental problem traces way beyond Carter, to Congressional and Executive fiscal and monetary irresponsibility during the Johnson, Nixon and Ford administrations. It was during the late 1960s and in the early 1970s that the pace of disorderly world economic changes intensified largely because of the catastrophic American inflation engendered by the Vietnam war and by excessive government expenditures on the Great Society. This authentic American inflation was exported throughout the world, and it brought about instability among the currency relationships of all major nations. As national monies, especially the dollar, fluctuated unpredictably, it became increasingly implausible for working people, once schooled in the phrase "sound as the dollar," to be confident in the future purchasing power of their money savings. Moreover, when Western world currencies began to float up and down in the early 1970s, as they do often violently today, we had to expect foreign goods, sold for depreciated foreign currencies, to become intensely competitive at prices with which Americans could not always compete. In a word, the present world economic disorder cannot be dissociated from inflationary American monetary policies.

Today, we have arrived at the point where countries tend to push the price of their currencies up or down, depending upon the trade objectives they wish to achieve. Soon nations may openly attempt to steal markets from their competitors by making their currencies cheap and imports dear. Leaders of all countries may be tempted, by the examples of certain industrialized competitors, to impose hidden import taxes on their citizens and try to increase their export markets through the systematic devaluation of their currencies. We Americans can hardly complain. These countries will have learned some of these policies from us. During the last inflationary decade, we Americans began by showing the world how the world's greatest power could manipulate monetary policy and the value of the dollar. Are we now to join forever the ranks of the irresponsible economic nationalists of other nations, the consequences of whose defective monetary policies have always resulted in trade barriers and restrictive agreements? Having sewn the seeds of chaos, the world may well reap the whirlwind of global economic warfare.●

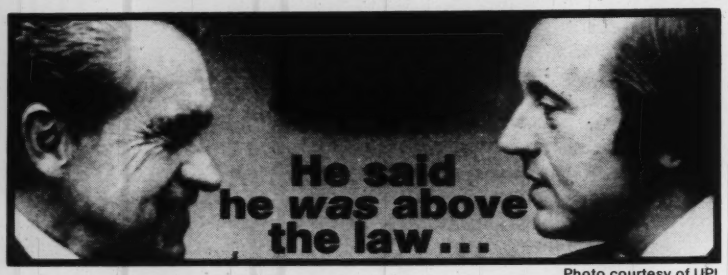

Photo courtesy of UPI

NOT ABOVE THE LAW
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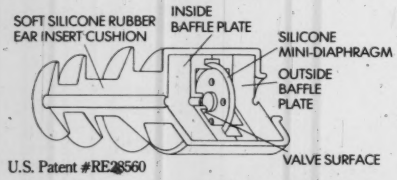

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Letters

Well done . . . overdone?

Though I enjoyed Jesse Kornbluth's and Richard Corliss' pieces on *Star Wars*, I have my own explanation for the film's popularity ("The gleaming of America" and "A cool look at a hot 'star,'" June 24):

It's generally known—except to journalists—that there is a nameless, loose-knit group of Americans who are intent on doing something—might nigh *anything*—that cannot be analyzed by the press. Their current project, I can now reveal, was attending *Star Wars*. It could have been *the* one, but missed by a hair, as evidenced by the well-done articles in *New Times*. Ah, well. Maybe next year.

Carroll Short
Quinton, Alabama

The idea of C-3PO and R2-D2 wasn't difficult for me to swallow, but the idea of "the force" certainly was.

The fact that this science fiction extravaganza is, in truth, a religious epic complete with Moses' walking stick, seems to have almost entirely escaped Mr. Kornbluth's "hidden message" critique. It seems that we are continually inundated by the belief in "the force," and never given a chance to question it.

Well, I question it, and will continue to question why "the force" must be with us.

Gil Fitzer
Bayside, New York

In an article on heroic, lovable robots, how could Jesse Kornbluth possibly have overlooked the most famous cybernetic hero of all time? R2-D2 and C-3PO are not the first, for in the same decade as HAL, there appeared one who became so famous he even had a statue erected to him. He is the Robinson's robot on *Lost in Space*. It was he who fought a duel to the death with the evil Robotoid that once walked into Kornbluth's wall, and was about to hand the Robinsons over to a sinister alien experimenter.

O. C. Bendtsen
Saunderstown, R. I.

Tongue in chic

But of course bottled spring water is a luxury! (Food, June 24). I'm so chic that whenever I'm home (near Deer Park, Maryland) on vacation, I bathe in a whole tub-full of the stuff.

David L. Schwing
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Slime and punishment

Thank you for your excellent report on the horrifying "kiddie porn" atrocities in this country (June 24). Perhaps by exposing this most deplorable situation people will become incensed enough to try to curb it. We seem to be reaping the fruits of the "freedom revolution," which dismissed pornography as a victimless crime and relaxed porn laws as a result. It is shocking, but what is truly frightening is that this, too, may possibly become banal, in time, to porn audiences, and God only knows what will replace it.

J. Callahan
Rochester, New York

I feel that Anson lost sight of what exactly a child is. The child has no choice. The teenager has reached puberty and "the age of reason." This I can say for a fact, having been "on the streets of Hollywood" during my high-school years. No one pushed me into anything I did. I was not "led down the garden path."

Loneliness, as Mr. Anson mentioned, is probably the greatest factor in sending adolescents out to the streets. No law will ever stop that. Loneliness and sexual gratification make great companions.

John Knight
Los Angeles

If Anita Bryant really wants to "Save Our Children," she should quit racing around the country trying to destroy the civil rights of consenting adult homosexuals, and start trying to convince officials to put convicted kiddie pornographers behind bars. The Supreme Court notwithstanding, kiddie porno *is* obscene; the "standards" of the "community" in which it is found should be irrelevant.

Deborah Tully
Marine Corps Base, Virginia

Chicken and chickenhawks, flesh peddlers and pederasts have existed far longer in history than porno films. While Anson and I agree this is a disgusting side of life, the free market will take care of this chic far more effectively than legislation.

Anson's rhetoric had the ring of political motivation and knee-jerk liberalism. Is a request to burn books any less reprehensible from a U.S. liberal than from a totalitarian despot?

Mel Hodes
State College, Pennsylvania

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The Insider

Seventies

DENVER POST PHOTO BY IRA GAY SEALY

Coors strikers: Deviant sex

Part 1: Golden, Colorado

On July 19, the National Labor Relations Board will decide whether or not the Coors Beer Company can use a polygraph to determine whether employees and prospective employees are truly employable. The Coors Company in Golden, Colorado, wants the polygraph clause inserted in a new contract, currently being contested by the AFL-CIO local at the plant. In addition to the polygraph, which the company would use whenever it saw fit, Coors is asking for the right to conduct "strip-downs," and "body searches."

According to union sources, the company is delving into "acts of deviant sexual behavior," "types of sexual dealings with wives" and "relations with anyone other than your wife." Job applicants are also being asked about participation in "any type of marches, sit-ins, organizations or riots."

Coors public relations director Bert Summers says the lie detector tests are the company's way of seeing "if applicants have had any illnesses, especially when back injuries are involved." One section of the contract, which cited as grounds for immediate dismissal "conduct on company premises which violates common decency or morality of community," drew no comment from company officials. "I guess those questions have nothing to do with injuries," Summers said.

Union spokesman Allen Zack said the Coors contract was the "worst outrage in years." The local has been on strike for four months. The strike force has dropped from 1,400 to about 400 in the interim. *—Ed Kiersch*

Bryantitis sweeps nation; Libertines take beating from Rockies to Jersey

Part 2: Cleveland, Ohio

Beware of garbagemen bearing letters. Cleveland Mayor Ralph J. Perk, in his continuing holy war on smut, decided that Cleveland somehow had to determine "acceptable standards of decency" for itself. What better way than through a questionnaire, distributed two to each household? What cheaper way to distribute than through a municipal worker with plenty of house-to-house contact?

The garbage goes, the survey arrives: "WE CAN FORBID THE SALE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN CLEVELAND." Answer 18 questions, return the form in the envelope provided and, "with God's help, we'll once again have a decent city in which to live and bring up our children."

Contents of the survey were a closely guarded secret almost up to Perk's June 20 press conference, when they were to be made public. However, somebody stole a copy of the four-page form from the city's division of printing and leaked it to the Cleveland *Press* and *Plain Dealer*, both of which printed the form in their June 18 issues.

At last it could be told: "We would like to have your opinion about what types of books, magazines or films *appeal to a shameful or morbid interest in sex.*"

• Question 9: "Books, magazines or films which sexually cater to such persons as homosexuals or sadists. Should such materials be kept from public sale or viewing?" (Answer yes, no, or don't know.)

• Question 15: "When such materials show or describe *abnormal or perverted sexual acts*, should the material be considered patently or obviously offensive?" (Yes, no, don't know.)

Perk, who's up for re-election in November, wants to forward results of the poll to the Supreme Court and to President Carter. But the poll—which could cost financially strapped Cleveland nearly $50,000 before it's completed—has been called worthless.

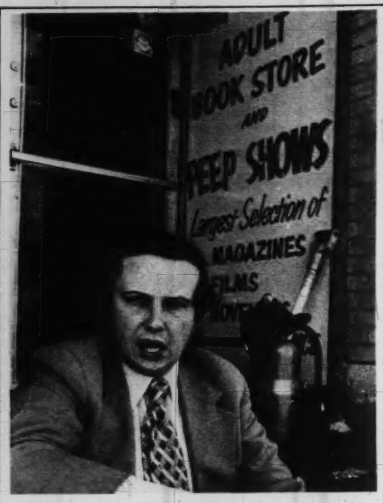
Local jurists call attention to the mayor's name, appearing twice on an introductory letter attached to the survey, a possible bias factor for the respondents. One judge said the poll was too vague, and too difficult for a high school graduate to understand. Another judge facetiously praised Perk for "a shrewd political move at taxpayers' expense."

But apparently many of the 240,000 Cleveland households receiving the form were ringing with anything but laughter. The mayor's office and the *Press* both reported sizable responses to the poll last week. Opinion, at last report, was strongly anti-porn.

—Bob Tkacz

UPI

Mayor Perk: Wants to know who's naughty and nice



PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDA McCONNELL

McKernan: Shutting out "adults"

Part 3: Camden, New Jersey

The Supreme Court can't define pornography, but Camden, New Jersey, can. In the past four months, Camden, once a flourishing middle-class city, home of Campbell Soup and RCA Victor, has been waging a *blitzkrieg* on pornography, because its government is convinced sleaze is sinking what's left of Camden fast. The city's population has dropped by 100,000 to 450,000, in the last 10 years, and its industry is quickly leaving town.

Mayor Angelo Errechetti recently ordered city attorney Martin McKernan Jr. to find some way to stop porn; the rateable businesses in the area were looking longingly at respectable suburban industrial parks. Morals were one thing, tax dollars another. McKernan dug up a fire ordinance passed by conservative San Diego in 1970. According to this moss-backer, peep-show parlors were required to provide lighted exits, 50-inch aisles between viewing booths, and booth walls so thick they'd take an hour to burn through. McKernan also came up with a weights-and-measures regulation to hit adult bookstores; it required a declaration of "manufacturers' responsibility" to accompany every blue movie, and that the length of the film be "accurately recorded." Since most porn producers aren't buyer-safety conscious and tend to overestimate their products' lengths, peep shows and adult book stores were successfully busted, again and again.

The biggest adult bookstores, the Futura and the Boulevard, were faced with fines totaling $34,000. Finally their common "owner-operator" confessed he wasn't the "real owner," but McKernan found an ordinance to cover that, too. *—Craig Waters*

Atoms in the valley

One of the biggest battles over the nuclear power plant issue is heating up in California's San Joaquin Valley. There, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power wants to build a $6.4 billion plant. If it's completed, it will be the largest in North America and the second largest in the world. If it's not, it will probably be due to the angry opposition of bands of local farmers. James Payne, a leader in the anti-nuclear San Joaquin Agricultural Protection Council, says that the plant will be the ruination of farming in the region: "If this thing gets in, nothing in this damned valley will be much good. The land will be lost forever."

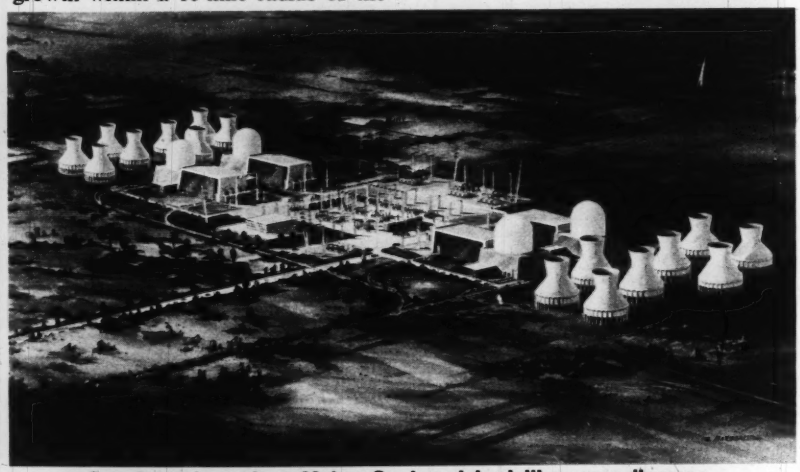
The plant will take 3,500 acres of fertile land, and some 160,000 acre-feet of water to cool its huge 5,200 megawatt generators. Payne and the farmer-lobbyists say that deposits from the plant's cooling process will cover thousands of acres of Kern County green cotton fields and turn the area into a vast salt marsh.

Vito Fabbri, the head of the local state Resource Conservation Board, estimates that every green growth within a 10-mile radius of the plant will be threatened; each of the state's 138 Conservation District representatives, elected by local farmers, have come out against the San Joaquin project. "I developed this land from sagebrush and rattlesnakes," Fabbri says. "I'm gonna lose everything I've worked for if this thing goes ahead."

The Department of Water and Power, and a number of smaller utilities that have latched onto the San Joaquin plan, have promised to compensate the farmers who own their own land. For those who rent their land, there won't be any consolation. "Los Angeles tells me I don't have any interest on this land because I don't own it," James Payne says. "That won't explain away the 15 years I've worked on this piece of earth."

Payne, Fabbri and the Agricultural Protection Committee have been pressuring the Kern County supervisors to stop plans for the plant. The Department of Water and Power has said it will abandon the project only if the supervisors come out in opposition; sources close to the board say that might happen by summer's end.

—Joel Kotkin



San Joaquin project: Makes Seabrook look like a woodburner

World of our fathers

The children of the sixties, who vowed they'd never live like their parents, have reneged—they're emulating them. A UCLA study says the generation that heated up the last decade has now cooled into the traditional middle-class experience of raising children, just like their folks.

Since 1973, a team of UCLA psychologists has been studying four types of "sixties' youth": the kind that live in communes, the kind married by "social contract," single mothers who stayed unmarried out of conviction, and conventional suburban marrieds. So far, researchers haven't found any differences among any of the groups in the ways they raise their children. According to the study, even in communal and egalitarian social-contract marriages, the mother takes care of the children 95 percent of the time. As usual, the father withdraws.

Moreover, there's no apparent differences in the children themselves. On personality and intelligence tests, offspring of all groups scored practically alike.

Apocalypse when

The rabbits and the chickens and the bees had been purchased, the petroleum and wheat stockpiled; behind the new, low ranch houses extra firewood was stacked. They sat waiting in Stelle, Illinois, in the hot evening hours of July 3 to see if, as Stelle's founder, Richard Kieninger, predicted last September, "the United States will be prevented from celebrating its 201st birthday."

Kieninger had received his message from what he calls his spiritual "Brotherhood ," which, he explains, directs him. On the strength of his vision, he founded the community, preparing it to lead a new civilization when this one ends, due to continental buckling on May 5, 2000 (*NT:* June 14, 1974). Among his other cosmic adviseries was one instructing him to develop technology that will allow all of us to be lifted above the earth until the buckling stop. As for the July 4, 1977, warning, Kieninger admitted on the eve of apocalypse that he had "mixed feelings about this prediction. It's a little like watching your mother-in-law drive off a cliff in your new Cadillac."

In fact, when he first received the message about the 201st birthday, Kieninger confessed, "I just didn't get excited about it. I have a much stronger feeling about something happening in the fall." Asked if the failure of the nation to collapse July 4 would cause him to doubt his call on the end of the world, he chewed on a cookie. "Not at all, that's a much more definite message." Then: "But today isn't over yet."

As visitors who came to wait for the end waited, workers in a Stelle industries plant labored on their Sunday shift, making plastic dye and wood laminate. Down the road, two huge greenhouses sit nearly ready: when they're finished they'll be used to experiment with hypotonic vegetation—growing food in salt water and a medium other than dirt, a process that will come in handy when the continents have shifted.

"If it doesn't happen," said one Stelle member, "I won't have to eat all the beef stew I've stockpiled."

July 4 came, and then July 5. Nothing especially apocalyptic happened, and across the continent millions were not prevented from celebrating America's 201st birthday. "I have no trouble with this," said one Stelle member. "It's just a misinterpretation. The prediction didn't necessarily say July 4—it just said America's 201st birthday." The Stelle community's reaction was not one of alarm. "I'm glad," one Stellian said. "The greenhouses weren't ready anyway."

—Doug Bauer

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Politics

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WIDE WORLD

WIDE WORLD

Cohen and Case: GOP's last, best hopes

Down to 38 Senate seats, the Republican power elite has decided to pour a lot of money into a few crucial targets in the 1978 races. The softest Democrats, the GOP thinks, are: Dick Clark of Iowa, William Hathaway of Maine and Floyd Haskell of Colorado. Clark is considered particularly vulnerable because of his probable opponent—three-term Governor Robert Ray. Hathaway will have to fight long, handsome Representative William Cohen, one of the few Republican Watergate heroes. The GOP bucks will really be moving in Colorado, where the Republican organization is ready to raise a quick fortune for either the favored fresh-faced Congressman Bill Armstrong or former Apollo 13 astronaut Jack Swigert in the battle against Haskell (who only pulled 51 percent in 1972).

One surprise Republican bonus is the reported decision of 73-year-old Senator-statesman Clifford Case of New Jersey to run for re-election. Hugely popular and still sharp, Case, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has started fund raising for his fifth-term race in Washington.

D. C. murder: the last tip

Alexis Goodarzi, the murdered maitre d' of Washington's Soigne Rotunda restaurant, had a life that was filled with politics, sex and money. Early on the morning of May 12, a passing bicyclist found the body of the 36-year-old Iranian in his orange Porsche with two bullets in his head.

Not only had Goodarzi placed bets for some of the class customers who frequented the Rotunda, and got "dates" for congressmen (Wayne Hays among them), but now it seems that he had other activities as well.

We've learned, from high-ranking Iranian intelligence sources, that Goodarzi had a close relationship with members of Savak, the Iranian secret police. Goodarzi met at least four times prior to his murder with Mohammed Farzaneh, an influential Savak agent. The two met at both Goodarzi's condominium apartment and at the Rotunda. According to reliable sources, Farzaneh arranged for the transport of Goodarzi's body to Iran and demanded (and was refused) Goodarzi's personal belongings, including business transaction records, mementos from politicians and personal papers.

Our sources say they have a list of eight congressmen whom Goodarzi provided with call girls. Four of those on the list have been publicly identified in the press as having an involvement in the Korean influence-buying scandal. One congressman on the list is on the House Ethics Committee, currently investigating the Korean scandal.

—Murray Waas

The Word

Jive talkin' Safire

In a recent *New York Times* column examining the punk phenomenon, Bill Safire cited the Bee Gees as an example of a rock group whose wealth is "turning off some of their audience." He then flaunted his rock expertise—undoubtedly acquired by hanging out with Tricia and Julie during the days when he toiled as a Nixon speechwriter—by disclosing that the group took its name "from narcotics slang 'boy and girl,' a mixture of dope—unless it's innocent reminiscence of Benny Goodman."

UPI

Safire: Does twist

His sources? "I'm speculating there," Safire admits, "but I'm enough of a student of slang to know that 'B and G' is a narcotic reference. I think it's a combination of cocaine and heroin, or cocaine and something—at any rate, it's a well-known drug term."

The group consists of three brothers whose last name is Gibb, ergo Brothers Gibb, ergo Bee Gees (BGs). Fred Gershon, president of the Stigwood Group, which handles all aspects of the band's career, was not pleased. "It reminds me of those 'experts' who discovered that 'Puff the Magic Dragon' was a drug song," he said. "We feel very badly about it." Had Safire read beyond the cover of *Rolling Stone*, he would have learned that the notoriously straight Bee Gees picked their name in 1958, when the oldest member of the group was eleven.

Bill Safire may be confused about the Bee Gees' initials, but he obviously understands the meaning of his own.

—Paul Slansky

Post Scripts

May the force be with you

Among the police departments fighting for the title of America's meanest cops (*NT*: June 10), the Philadelphia force has been formidable. Known on CB waves as "Rizzo Raiders" after the man who was once their chief and is now their mayor, the men who defend the City of Brotherly Love have taken Frank Lazarro Rizzo's ascension as license to kill, batter, maim.

On June 24, the Philadelphia *Inquirer* reported the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old disturbed man who had been wandering naked in his neighborhood carrying a four-foot tree limb. The same day, two *Inquirer* reporters, Jonathan Neumann and William K. Marinow, who have worked on the local atrocities for two months, documented the story of the near-fatal beating of Edgardo Ortiz. Ortiz, tired from working the night shift at his job, opened his apartment door in response to the banging of nightsticks in the predawn light. He made the mistake of showing indignance at the intrusion, told the police they had no warrant and concluded, "I know my rights."

UPI

Rizzo: "Spacco il capo!"

"You don't have no rights," the *Inquirer* quotes an officer saying. Then, as his wife and child watched, three policemen beat Ortiz nearly senseless, and dragged the "big fucking spic" in for booking on charges of assaulting a police officer.

In the last two months, 24 apparently innocent Philadelphians have been clubbed or punched—one stabbed in the groin. Another innocent man had nightsticks "played like drums" on his body.

So far, not one police officer has been disciplined or suspended, and no disapproval has been expressed by Mayor Rizzo. The day the *Inquirer* reported the naked man's murder and Ortiz's brutalization, it also ran a four-column picture of the mayor sitting in Rome with his host, Italian Senate President Amintore Fanfani. When Fanfani asked Rizzo for advice on how to deal with Italy's civil unrest, the Mayor suggested that they fly ten Italian cops to Philadelphia. "We'll show them how to eat these guys up." Then, pounding on a table, Rizzo shouted in Calabrese, "Spacco il capo! Spacco il capo!" Translated, the phrase means "Break their heads."

—Greg Walter

Mind & Body

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Never had a brother given so much. In St. Louis, 30-year-old Terry Twomey donated one of his testicles to his twin brother Tim Twomey, who had none. Tim Twomey first discovered he had no gonads when he failed to pass into puberty along with Terry. Thanks to testosterone injections, Tim managed to reach sexual maturity and potency—though not fertility. When he and his wife decided they wanted to make more Twomeys, they turned to Terry for one of his testicles.

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—Larry Fredericks

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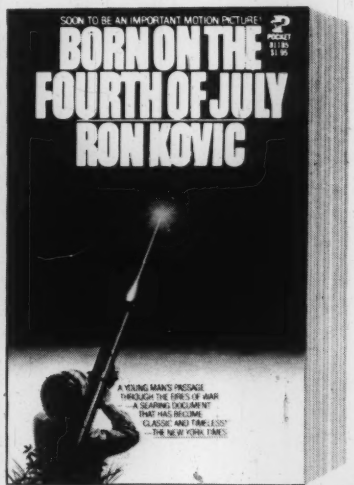
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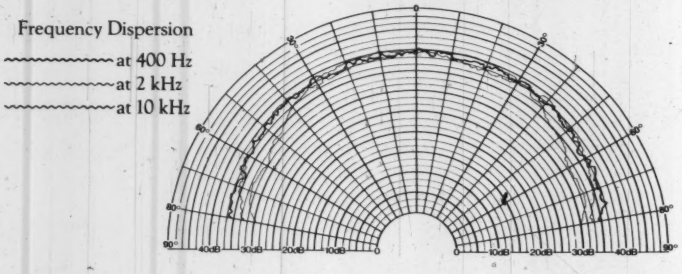

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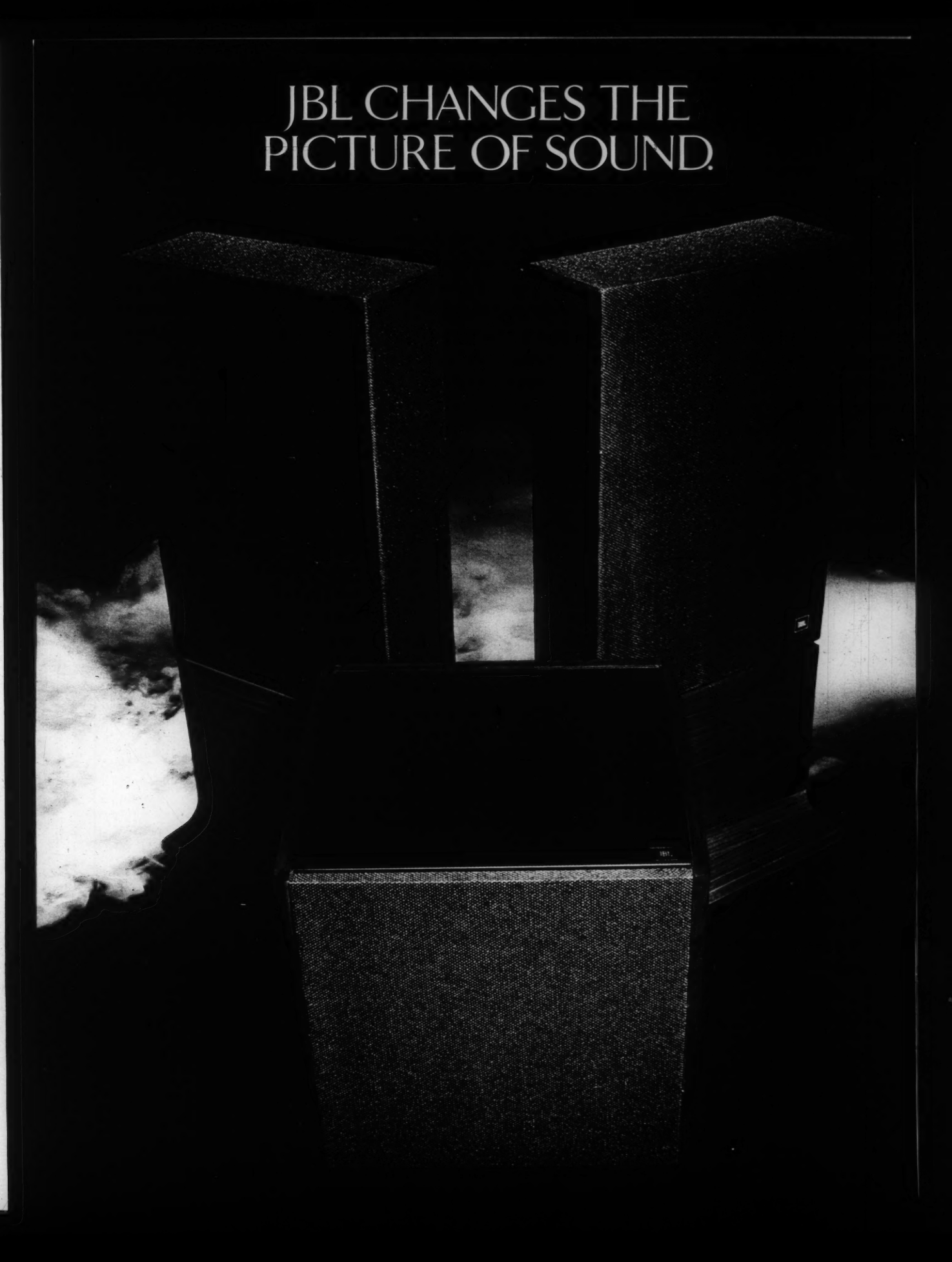

HARUO

How much does a banana republic like Costa Rica go for these days? For Robert Vesco, the price is rising dramatically—and so is the heat

The Pirate Who Would Be King

By Stephen Diamond

They say a political 'scandal' never lasts more than seven days in Costa Rica. But on the twenty-first day of the latest scandal surrounding fugitive financier Robert Lee Vesco and his five-year presence in Costa Rica, something unusual occurred. A candidate for president in Costa Rica's February 1978 elections, G.W. Villalobos, leader of a minority party and definitely an eccentric, called the country's four television networks, twenty radio stations and all eleven of the daily and weekly newspapers, inviting them to show up at Vesco's suburban mansion and "something will happen."

At 3 p.m. on June 3, candidate Villalobos appeared on the street in front of Vesco's compound office-residence draped in a swirling Costa Rican flag. Then, before startled media people and onlookers, the heavyset, mustachioed Villalobos pulled out a .45 caliber pistol in one hand, and a 9mm. rifle in the other, and pumped over 60 blasts into Vesco's fortress. Several bullets ricocheted off the ten-foot-high cement walls which have served as Vesco's insulation from the country that has been his haven for the last five years. Two of the six video-scanners that keep constant watch on the neighboring streets approaching the Vesco compound were blown out in the fusillade.

"Come on out Vesco," Villalobos taunted between blasts: "I'm wrapped in the Costa Rican flag and I want to die for my country. If you're too cowardly to come out, send one of your thugs." Vesco did not come out, needless to say, nor did any of the twenty-odd employees inside the offices and residence. Ten minutes later, Villalobos was taken peacefully into custody by representatives of the *Guardia Civil.*

Certainly Villalobos' mad act was out of keeping with the democratic, non-violent tradition of Costa Rican political life. But it was the most volatile of recent tremors which have been shaking this formerly stable coffee-and-banana republic with the persistence of a minor quake—minor, but threatening to escalate into a full-blown Managua. It could just topple the current government and result in Vesco's expulsion from his so-far impenetrable pirate's haven.

Labeled by one Costa Rican newsman as "the man who bought himself a republic," Robert Vesco's five-year existence in this Central American democracy has been characterized by "turbulent" skirmishes both from within and without.

Accused by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of sacking over $100 million from the now-defunct Investors Overseas Services (IOS) mutual funds conglomerate, Vesco and seven of his cohorts arrived in Costa Rica in June 1972. The federal grand jury indictments started rolling in several months later, but Vesco was by then already well-entrenched in his new fiefdom. One of the many indictments estimates that over 200,000 individual investors were maimed in the international IOS debacle. Vesco claims total innocence in the matter, insisting that the millions of IOS dollars are "where they should be," in banks and investments around the globe.

In spite of the 1973 U.S. extradition attempt, local lawsuits, and even an alleged "kidnapping" attempt to bring him back to stand trial in the U.S., Vesco has maintained his powerful hold: "It costs him a helluva lot of money every day, just to stay here," one Costa Rican stockbroker told me.

But recent revelations of Vesco's skullduggery in Costa Rican politics, quite reflective of his role in surreptitiously contributing $200,000 to Nixon's 1972 campaign, have brought about a bubbling scandal that even media-conscious Vesco will not be able to contain. And, ironically enough, the man responsible for the latest uproar, which seems to be forcing Vesco out of his haven, is also the one individual most responsible for making Costa Rica *safe* for the "century's biggest financial pirate," as Vesco has been called.

Don Jose "Pepe" Figueres, 70, three times president of his country, a maverick and something of a legend in Central American lore, paved the way for Vesco's entry and subsequent stranglehold on Costa Rica. During the middle of his third term, in July 1972, Figueres accepted a $2.5 million "investment" from Vesco and his cabal. Don Pepe's personal businesses were hurting for capital, and Robert Vesco, seeking to move his operation from the Bahamas, was only too happy to be of help. In exchange for the loan, Vesco and the seven others who came with him received the gold key to San Jose, the capital city, and then some: President Figueres arranged for "special envoy" passports for the pirate and his stateless, but not penniless, crew. Vesco's mammoth Boeing 707 would land at Juan Santamaria Airport and rarely would the fugitive gringo, or his people, ever go through Costa Rican customs: Figueres had given Vesco a protective mantle.

More important, the then-president provided Vesco with connections to the highest political, social and economic

ILLUSTRATION BY HARUO MIYAUCHI

strata of his country. Figueres openly defended Vesco's presence to his citizens. In response to public charges of smuggling against Vesco and the others, Figueres went on television and declared: "These are people wealthy enough not to have to stoop to smuggling or evading customs laws. There have been no irregularities." On another occasion, Figueres (who would later write to Howard Hughes, inviting him, too, to come to Costa Rica) told televiewers that "I wish more Vescos would come to Costa Rica—we need them."

It was also President Figueres who arranged for the "Vesco Law," a rewrite of the extradition procedures which took overall extraditionary powers away from the courts and placed them in the hands of the president. And in 1973, when Vesco was under fire for attempting to set up a machine-gun factory in Costa Rica, a peaceful country with no standing army, Don Pepe again went on nationwide television to calm the population, even though his son Marti figured among the principals in the project, which never got off the ground. Figueres even went so far as to write a speech for Vesco, which the country's most notorious gringo read on television, claiming he was merely a retired *pensionado* wishing to live in peace and away from the U.S.'s "political persecution" because of his friendship with the Nixon family.

But in recent times, Don Pepe, whose role as godfather to the Costa Rican people has been tarnished, changed his tune.

"My association with Robert Vesco has damaged me in the public eye, in Costa Rica and the world," a remorseful Figueres told Ken Bode, political editor of the *New Republic*, in an April interview: "Many members of congress in my country as well as the current president were elected with Vesco's money. [President Daniel] Oduber had a large part of his 1974 campaign paid for by Vesco. All of them have let me carry the burden . . . "

It took two weeks for that piece of news to reach San Jose, but when it did, Don Pepe's words struck the country like a thunderbolt. Current President Oduber, chief of the *Partido Liberación Nacional*, a party founded by Figueres in 1948 (and which he still serves as chairman emeritus), denied the charges at first, then claimed the money was "returned immediately" after its origins were discovered— faintly reminiscent of Bebe Rebozo's claim to have returned Howard Hughes' $100,000 cash contribution to the Nixon campaign.

Oduber would not say which of Figueres' companies had served as conduit for the funds, nor would he reveal the amounts involved. This did not sit well with the Costa Rican people (popularly called "Ticos") who remembered that two days before his May 1974 inauguration, President Oduber paid an official visit to Vesco's Curridabat compound 20 minutes south of San Jose.

"I went to check on what he's doing here, and how he's conducting himself," Oduber told the press on inauguration day— but in Costa Rica, it is a crime for a foreigner to contribute to political campaigns, and for Oduber to have received Vesco donations would make the current president an accomplice in the crime as well.

But politicians like Oduber, Figueres, and the unknown number of Costa Rican congressmen, weren't the only ones to have benefited from the fugitive financier's presence in their country. In the past five years, Vesco and his original group (now somewhat fragmented) provided employment for all manner of Ticos. Journalists, security men, attorneys, large-scale landowners, business operators, and various levels of government officials followed their leader, Don Pepe, and responded hungrily to the millions of IOS dollars which the exiled Vesco was said to have brought with him through conduits in the Bahamas, Europe and Panama.

Vesco's "investments" in Costa Rica are impossible to follow given the country's corporation laws; all ownership papers are totally secret. Costa Ricans use the initials S.A. to signify *sociedad anonyma* (their version of 'Inc.'), but in San Jose, the emphasis is on the *anonyma*, and not on the *sociedad*. It is alleged that Vesco has between $30–60 million tied up in Costa Rican government bonds—in addition to the other millions in nongovernmental investments. Even with a conservative estimate, the $300 million that Robert Vesco may have at his disposal is a hefty sum in a country whose annual fiscal budget is around $500 million. To complement his work, the gringo pirate purchased huge tracts of arable lands, put big money into a television and radio network, founded a daily newspaper with Don Pepe as the front man, and formed a host of other business alliances in Costa Rica, all of which served to enhance his worldwide image as "the man who would be king," and simultaneously throw the sovereignty of this small country into question—in the minds of the Ticos, and the outside world as well.

In response to the public outcry for an investigation into Don Pepe's claims to the *New Republic*, Vesco immediately issued a press release on May 6, this year:

"It should be obvious, with all the Watergate problems surrounding an alleged contribution to the Nixon presidential campaign, that I would not do anything to start a recurrence of such a political scandal." Vesco's $200,000 contribution to Nixon in 1972 was said to have been made in the hopes that the president would then quash the SEC investigation against the financier. Ironically, it was Vesco's very cash that ended up financing Hunt, Liddy, Barker and the others' escapades on the fifth floor of the Watergate building.

Rodrigo Carazo, an opposition party candidate for president, filed suit against President Oduber in early May, asking the Supreme Court to indict the president for violating the constitution by receiving funds from a foreign citizen for a political campaign. Costa Rica does not have provisions for impeachment of a president. Carazo's suit was thrown out for being improperly written, but the fat was certainly in the fire by that time.

The seven-day longevity rule of scandal was being stretched further and further— partly because it is an election year, and politics is to Costa Rica what football is to America. Oduber's own Second Vice President Fernando Guzman Mata, sensing the seriousness of the latest scandal, appealed to the country's notorious gringo: "Mr. Vesco, for the well-being, tranquility and international prestige of our country, I invite you to leave Costa Rica as soon as possible." Radical university students protested, claiming their national sovereignty was placed in jeopardy, while conservative matrons planned to picket Rosalynn Carter's early June stopover in San Jose. Then 27 senators of the Oduber-Figueres PLN Party, some of whom may even have been in on the take, called for Vesco's expulsion. But the clamor may in the long run be more self-serving than realistic: Bob Vesco cannot legally quit the country as of this writing. He is under a bond held by the Costa Rican Supreme Court in a suit filed against him by an aging architect who claims to have been dunned out of a $200,000 nest egg in the 1971 IOS debacle.

Carlos Rechnitzer, 78, a small, wiry Austro-Hungarian who's lived in Costa Rica for the past 30 years, filed suit against Vesco and the others in the spring of 1976. The case, lost by Rechnitzer in the lower courts, is on appeal at the Supreme Court. Until the hearing comes up, neither Vesco nor the others

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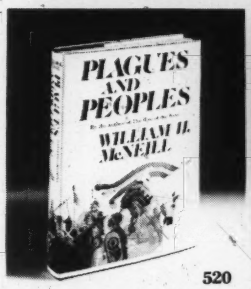

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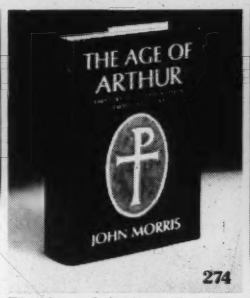

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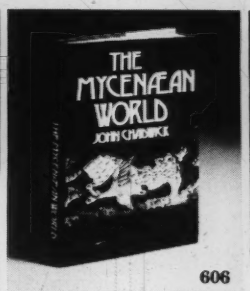

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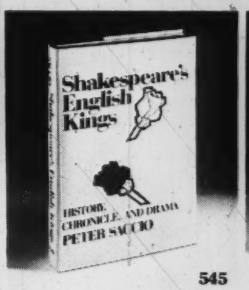

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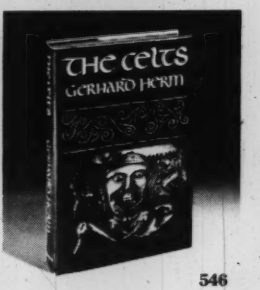

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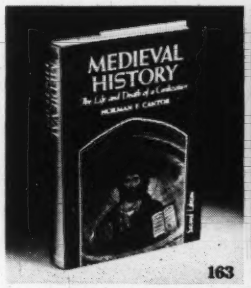

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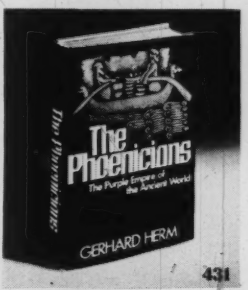

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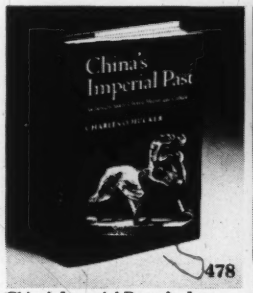

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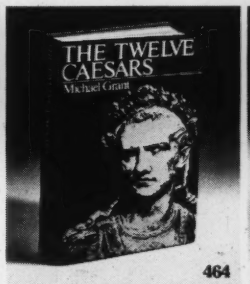

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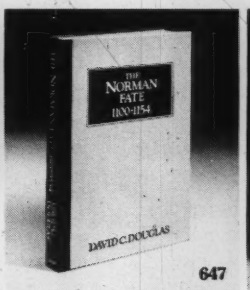

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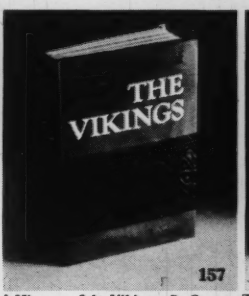

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On June 11, bowing perhaps to the growing pressures, President Oduber announced publicly that "I have asked Vesco to arrange his affairs here and abandon Costa Rica." Oduber's message, broadcast on national television and radio, added that Vesco was not culpable of any wrongdoing in Costa Rica, but that he was being asked to leave "because I do not want this matter to permanently sully the name of Costa Rica abroad."

But three days later, on June 13, Oduber reversed himself, again on public television and radio:

"I have never talked at any moment of 'throwing out' anyone from this country," the president told his people, leaving many Costa Ricans to wonder just what had transpired over the weekend between his two pronouncements. As if to clarify it, Oduber added, "My government believes that he should do so [leave], in order to settle his affairs—but he should leave with the safety of his investments in Costa Rica adequately guaranteed."

On top of such constitutional and legal snafus and political doubletalk there is the intriguing question of whether Robert Vesco is even *in* Costa Rica today. More than two months have passed without his having been seen in public—a rare enough occurrence even in less volatile times. Foreign correspondents traveling to Costa Rica, such as this reporter, have been denied interviews with Vesco himself, being referred instead to Alberto Abreu, Vesco's chief spokesman and a smooth operator in his own right. All of Vesco's comments on the recent uproar have come in the form of written communiques, or through Abreu, leading some people to wonder whether the man is in the country or not.

In the plush suburb of Curridabat, where Vesco's modernistic mansion sits a stone's throw from the Russian Embassy residence, neighbors said they hadn't seen Vesco's late-model silver-gray Mercedes for several weeks prior to the shooting incident.

Out at his Guanacaste Province ranch, 4,000 acres complete with private airfield and a brace of speedy PT boats ready for a quick exit from the 30-mile strip of Vesco's Pacific Ocean beach frontage, the *peons* were as protectively close-mouthed as ever about their bossman's comings and goings. On May 21, the Miami *Herald* reported that Vesco's heavily outfitted sea-going yacht, *M.Y. Zodiac*, was quietly berthed at Nassau, Vesco's old Tripoli. According to the Bahamian grapevine, Vesco himself was aboard, ducking the Costa Rican heat. The *Herald* article surmised that the fugitive millionaire was on his way to Italy. Vesco, who claims to have rejected U.S. citizenship in 1975, insists that he's an Italian, by way of his father who was born in that country. But Italian officals have never confirmed it.

"Nationality is of no importance," Vesco told Derry Dyer, editor of the *Tico Times*, San Jose's English-language weekly, in 1974, and it is in keeping with his piratelike philosophy. Vesco, whose name always sounded like a corporation to me, is in fact some kind of volatile catalytic corporate-state rolled into one individual: because of the ostensibly large amount of capital at his disposal, Robert Vesco might logically adopt the Jolly Roger as his flag— that same pirate skull and bones used to signify dangerous poisons, for that has been the overall effect of his stay on Costa Rica.

"It's a *contaminación*," Rodrigo Carazo told me when I interviewed him in San Jose in early April. Carazo, who now stands a good chance of being elected president in the February 1978 elections, holds Vesco responsible for the wave of political corruption that began with the gringo's arrival in 1972: "It is not just Vesco's presence, but the contamination of great sums of money, rapidly applied with great pressure, which brought him to the important people of our country. Costa Rica was formerly known in the world as a special place, wherein existed a certain system of values, aspirations, traditions of freedom not found anywhere else. But Vesco has turned us into a modern Tortuga Island. Anywhere you go in the world now, that negative image of our country prevails. And only one man is responsible for this negativity—not a Costa Rican, but an American at that."

"It's a *contaminación*," says presidential hopeful Rodrigo Carazo. "Vesco has turned us into a modern Tortuga Island"

Robert Vesco, 20th century buccaneer raised as a poor Detroit row-house kid, a millionaire by 35, now 42 and fighting to maintain his lush Central American hideaway, may be dropping behind a Howard Hughes-type scrim of invisibility—but whether he's at his base in Costa Rica, sitting on the pirate ship *Zodiac* in Nassau Bay, or secretly slipping into Las Vegas for a night at the tables, Robert Vesco maintains a certain power grip, an importance on the world map equal only to nation-states, multinational corporations.

"I have access, at the American government, to all of the most secret matters, civil as well as military," Vesco told Claude Richoz, a Swiss interviewer in 1970, right at the beginning of the mammoth IOS heist. And it was probably true. Vesco's connections to the Nixon family were more than well-known: Donald Nixon, 32-year-old nephew of the former president, has worked for Robert Vesco since 1972, and still lives in San Jose with his wife and one-year-old son.

"Sure, I was under Bob's thumb, you could say that, though I have always admired the guy," Don Nixon told me in San Jose. "But I don't work for him anymore; we just see each other socially." According to Nixon, Vesco still "has stuff on Uncle Dick, and vice versa." Moreover, Vesco himself told independent filmmakers Karin Davidson and George Natanson, on camera, that former President Ford had promised him a pardon, but that the stink from the first pardon effectively nixed his.

"There are still quite a few powerful people on Capitol Hill who quake at the thought of Vesco's return to the U.S.—either voluntarily or by extradition," one Washington source told me. "He knows things about the Nixon-Ford years that Archibald Cox couldn't have dreamt in his wildest imagination."

Indeed, those who are familiar with Vesco and his ways are convinced that he knows a lot about the U.S. government, period. His success in eluding the Justice Department and the SEC (in spite of his reputed trips back to the States), his brags of Washington contacts, the several former CIA operatives in his employ—all point to a disquieting familiarity, if not continuing entree, into various branches of the U.S. government. In 1974, Scoop Jackson's subcommittee on investigations began to look into the entire Vesco matter, and came across what seemed to be a mysteriously quashed DEA investigation of a possible Vesco-banked heroin deal. According to testimony presented to the subcommittee, Fred Peroff, the DEA informant who had implicated Vesco in the drug smuggling operation, was turned out into the cold for his efforts, and the deal he had set up to catch the smugglers was called off for no apparent reason.

However strong Vesco's U.S. ties remain, there is no question that his forays into the world political and economic

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systems have brought him into contact with other independent power groups, potentates and manipulators of international events. As a nonaligned piece on the world chessboard, Vesco is free to matchmake deals between any imaginable political and economic combinations, regardless of ideological persuasion or definition.

"This man possesses mucho *shakti*, the Indian word for magnetism," Fernando Coto, 25, president of the 26,000-strong student union (FEU) at the University of Costa Rica, told me when I interviewed him in April, before the latest Figueres revelations: "Vesco has been like a comet, whirling through the monetary systems of the world, picking up energy, money, power, and finally landing here in our Costa Rica. Now, in the United States, gangsters on television and in films steal money and say, 'Let's get away to Costa Rica.'

"We are proud of our democracy in this country," Coto continues, with true Latin fervor, "and if it is proven that his money was used to sway our elections, then Robert Vesco has put our sovereignty as an independent nation in doubt. This is something which the Costa Rican people will not stand for. If this is the case, there is only one thing left to say—*Fuéra Robert, Out Vesco.*"

Now, in the wake of Don Pepe's revelations, G.W. Villalobos' shooting spree and President Oduber's waffling on the 'request' that Vesco leave Costa Rica, Fernando Coto's words are being echoed up and down the valleys and mountains of that small republic: *Fuéra Vesco*. And yet, the pirate's mark may be indelibly imprinted on this once-peaceful tropical paradise.

Like the *arroya*, the feared coffee blight that has destroyed much of the Guatemalan and Nicaraguan coffee crop, Robert Vesco's influence may not diminish even if he stays out of Costa Rica. His investments, business contacts, etc., will be maintained, even if he has to 'relocate' for a period of time. Moreover, one source has told me that Vesco owns land on the Panamanian side of the border, a mere 12-hour drive from San Jose. From such a close vantage point, Vesco could slip in and out of Costa Rica at will.

Ironically, just before this story went to press, Robert Vesco became eligible for Costa Rican citizenship. On June 29, he completed the five-year residency requirement for Costa Rican nationality. Moreover, the youngest of Vesco's five children, Patrick, was born on Costa Rican soil over a year and a half ago. Like most Central and South American republics, Costa Rican code assures quick naturalization for parents of Tico-born children. Now, with the enormity of the outcry against him, Vesco will most probably be unable to avail himself of that last escape clause.

"To those people who are deaf in their consciousness, it may appear normal for a president to write a speech for a man like Vesco to present on public television," Rodrigo Carazo tells me in front of his campaign headquarters on *Paseo Colón*: "But to those of us concerned with this problem, it is truly long-range. Mr. Vesco has already affected our lives, and that of our children. What remains to be seen is what his effect will be on the children of our children, those as yet unborn."

The whale in the fishpond

It is 4:30 in the afternoon and the presses at *La Nación*, Costa Rica's largest circulation daily, are being oiled and greased for the night's run. Out on the busy *Avenida Central*, lottery venders call out 'lucky' numbers and hope for a sale, while moneychangers flashing huge wads of American currency offer tourists a better rate of exchange than the state-owned banks. Large European-made public buses honk boisterously and spew out clouds of diesel exhaust, while uniformed school kids on bicycles dart between the cumbersome vehicles, daring fate and the bus drivers to strike them down. In the distance, church bells peal—there are always bells of one kind or another tolling in Costa Rica, a country of exquisite churches and basilicas—and as it is time for the late afternoon *café*, Julio Suñol, editorial page director for *La Nación*, offers me a cup of the black liquid that has helped restore Costa Rica's foreign deficit.

"He knows things about the Nixon-Ford years that Archibald Cox couldn't have dreamt in his wildest imagination," says friend Don-Don Nixon, Richard's nephew

"Robert Vesco's secretary called me, asking if I wanted to interview him," recalls Suñol, 45, a cofounder of the *Colegio de Periodistas* and author of *Vesco: The man who bought himself a republic*. "At that time, in 1972, a few months after his arrival here, I was questioning Vesco's presence and his relationship to then-President Don Pepe Figueres. Vesco had given no interviews up to that point, but because I was bringing things out in my paper, *Diario de Costa Rica*, Vesco himself wanted to talk to me. I said I'd be glad to interview Vesco, but he would have to come to my office. Since we were opponents, of sorts, I refused to go to his home. And only on the condition that every word of what we said to one another would be published."

At that interview, Vesco's first debut in what would be a long series of virtuoso media performances on the gringo's part, Vesco took the offensive, wanting to know why "you oppose me so strongly in your editorial line."

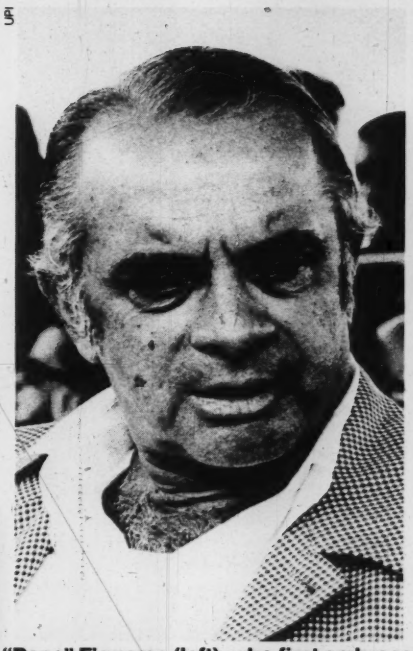
Suñol, a tall, bookish man with thick glasses, chain-smoking Rex cigarettes, replied: "For us, you signify a huge whale in a tiny fishpond. Your fortune is so vast that, even compared with the largest in our country, we are tiny." The concept of the whale would be popularized by Ticos after Suñol's interview was published.

Suñol recounts the story with the detached air of one who has seen political corruption up close, very close: "One night, President Figueres invited me to dinner, to discuss monetary problems, so he said. But when I got there, all he wanted to talk about was why he and I were political 'enemies.' I said, 'Don Pepe, we are not enemies. I am a journalist with certain responsibilities, just as you are a president with certain duties and responsibilities.'

"The president said he was planning to start a newspaper. He wanted to form an alliance with me, himself, and Robert Vesco's money. In addition to placing me as one of the directors of this new paper, Don Pepe Figueres offered me 5 million *colones*, about $575,000, to come over to their side, to stop criticizing his relationship to Vesco. You see, I also had a personal relationship with Figueres in that his wife Karin is the godmother of one of my children. And before the appearance of Robert Vesco, we were all on fairly good terms. But I had to tell him I could not join his alliance, even though my paper, *Diario*, was in financial straits, because I was waging a campaign against Vesco and political corruption in general.

"I reminded Don Pepe that when he invited me to dinner, to this discussion, that it was on the basis that he thought me an honorable person. I said, 'Don Pepe, if I accept this offer of 5 million *colones*, will you still think of me as an honorable person?' He replied, 'Don't turn this down, Julio, this is po-

WIDE WORLD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WIDE WORLD

Two against one: Former president Don "Pepe" Figueres (left), who first embraced Vesco, now regrets the relationship, and current president Daniel Oduber (middle) has asked Vesco to "abandon Costa Rica"

tentially big, *very big*. At least think it over for eight days, then let me know.' 'Not eight days, nor eight hours,' I told him, 'not even eight minutes.' If I consider it for a second, it puts me in the category of those who can be bought and sold."

Suñol's refusal of Figueres' offer preceded the demise of his newspaper by about four months. In that time, Figueres (and Vesco's money) went ahead and founded *Excelsior*, a *New York Times*-sized daily which has been Vesco's mouthpiece since its founding. Suñol ruefully recalls the manner in which Figueres and Vesco put his paper out of business: "I went on national television and told the story of President Figueres' offer. It was on July 4, 1973. The next day, the president himself came on, but he didn't deny what I'd said. He told the Costa Rican people, 'I don't know whether or not this is true, but if someone offered Julio Suñol that kind of money, and he didn't take it, there's got to be something wrong with him.'" A week after that incident, Figueres' son-in-law, Danilo Jimenez, a functionary of the administration, ordered all government public relations departments to cease advertising in Suñol's *Diario de Costa Rica*—which, incidentally, was Costa Rica's oldest daily. Pressure was also applied on the private sector, and *Diario* was forced to close its doors in April 1974. Suñol went to work for *La Nación*, and four months later, Figueres' *Excelsior* sprung to life—so to speak.

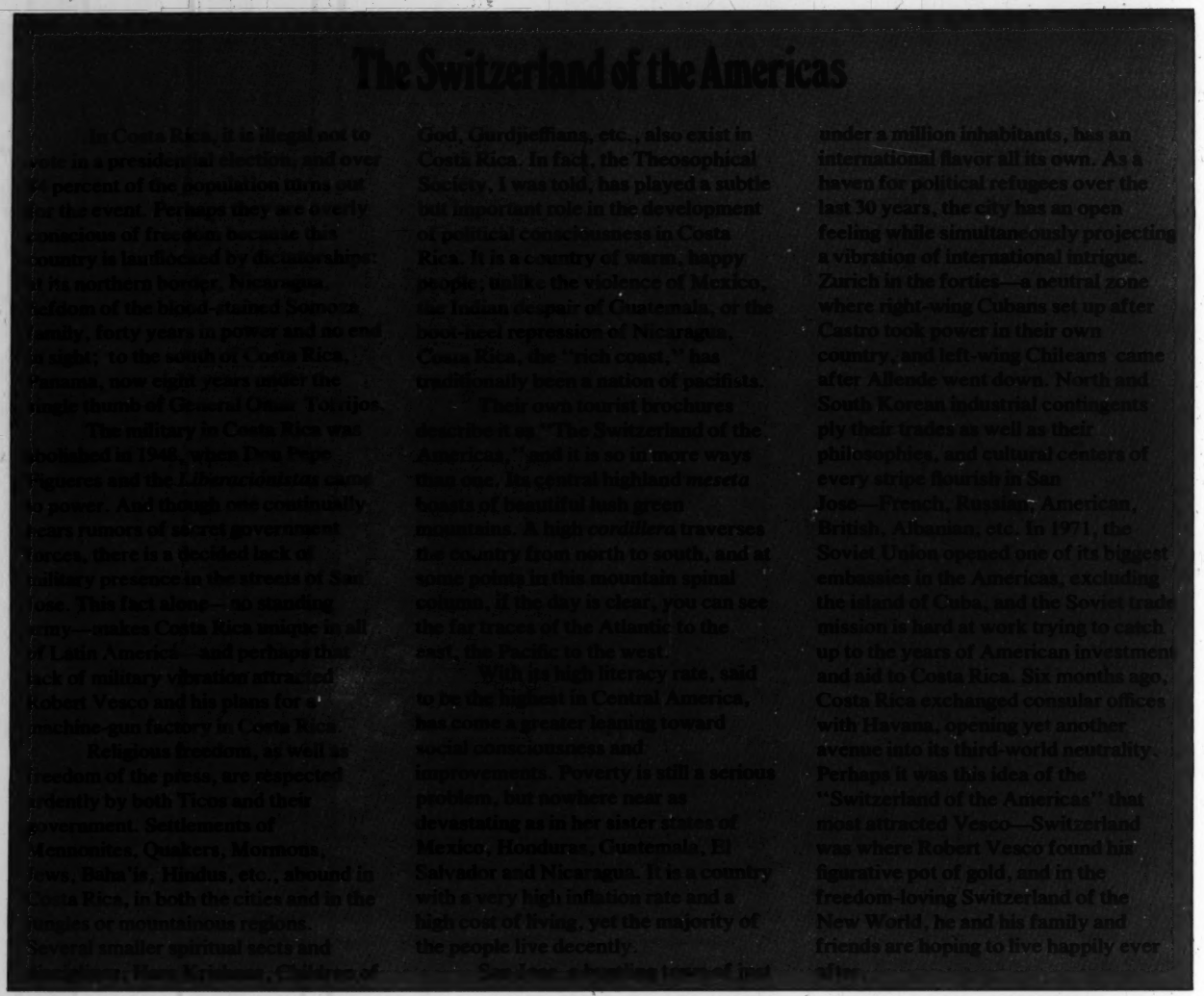
The *Excelsior*, of course, is only one of Vesco's many mouthpieces. There is, for instance, Alberto Abreu, who at 32 is Vesco's chief spokesman and aide-de-camp. A Dominican Republic-born naturalized Costa Rican citizen, Abreu has the suave, Porfirio Rubirosa hit: gold identification bracelet, sharply cut, tan three-piece suit (with a bulge under the left armpit), handsome, square-jawed, and 240 pounds of solid muscle on his six-foot-two frame. Tucked away in a corner of the dimly lit bar of the Hotel Europe, Abreu leans across the table and pleads, "You never hear about the good things Mr. Vesco has done for this country. Why don't you write about the Patricia Vesco Beneficial Society and the work that they have been doing with the poor and the elderly in Guanacaste Province? All of these things written in the press, about buying politicians, about guns coming in on private airplanes, the mafia, *it is all fabrication*. Mr. Vesco is a retired person. He spends ten hours a day working on his various legal defenses, and he is a brilliant man, that should be obvious. Even the farm in Guanacaste, *Mrs.* Vesco's farm, is purely experimental. It is not money-making agribusiness, but a family farm where they study different types of agriculture. These things never get reported."

Abreu defends his boss with a passion. If IOS was doing so well in 1971, he asks, why did they call in Robert Vesco to help them out in restructuring management? Abreu, whose CB code name in Costa Rica is AlphaAlpha, believes that the United States, through the CIA and other bureaus, has been after Vesco "because of his association with the Nixons."

"Former U.S. Ambassador Vaky once said in the Costa Rican press that if Mr. Vesco was serious about proving his innocence, he would return to the United States and stand trial." Abreu fingers his vermouth for a second, then adds, "But ask yourself this: isn't a man supposed to be presumed innocent until proven guilty? In Mr. Vesco's case, they've presumed him guilty and have, through the U.S. press, tried and convicted him." As we talk, it becomes apparent that Abreu *reveres* Bob Vesco, that he has the deepest faith and belief in the reams of propaganda which he and his patron have been dishing out to the Ticos for the past five years.

"One day we were eating lunch, people were walking by, and Mr. Vesco turned to me and said, 'If those people only knew what a privilege it is to be walking around in the streets, not worried about being recognized, or about enemies even as powerful as the whole United States government . . .'" And for a moment, I don't wonder that this super-*macho* might break into tears.

Behind the benign public camouflage, however, power and control are the names of the game. The money Vesco has spent in public relations, purchasing musical instruments for poor village schools, money spent in building roads,



The Switzerland of the Americas

In Costa Rica, it is illegal not to vote in a presidential election, and over 75 percent of the population turns out for the event. Perhaps they are overly conscious of freedom because this country is landlocked by dictatorships: at its northern border, Nicaragua, redeem of the blood-stained Somoza family, forty years in power and no end in sight; to the south of Costa Rica, Panama, now eight years under the single thumb of General Omar Torrijos.

The military in Costa Rica was abolished in 1948, when Don Pepe Figueres and the *Liberacionistas* came to power. And though one continually hears rumors of secret government forces, there is a decided lack of military presence in the streets of San Jose. This fact alone—no standing army—makes Costa Rica unique in all of Latin America—and perhaps that lack of military vibration attracted Robert Vesco and his plans for a machine-gun factory in Costa Rica.

Religious freedom, as well as freedom of the press, are respected ardently by both Ticos and their government. Settlements of Mennonites, Quakers, Mormons, Jews, Baha'is, Hindus, etc., abound in Costa Rica, in both the cities and in the jungles or mountainous regions. Several smaller spiritual sects and [illegible], Hare Krishnas, Children of God, Gurdjieffians, etc., also exist in Costa Rica. In fact, the Theosophical Society, I was told, has played a subtle but important role in the development of political consciousness in Costa Rica. It is a country of warm, happy people, unlike the violence of Mexico, the Indian despair of Guatemala, or the boot-heel repression of Nicaragua. Costa Rica, the "rich coast," has traditionally been a nation of pacifists.

Their own tourist brochures describe it as "The Switzerland of the Americas," and it is so in more ways than one. Its central highland *meseta* boasts of beautiful lush green mountains. A high cordillera traverses the country from north to south, and at some points in this mountain spinal column, if the day is clear, you can see the far traces of the Atlantic to the east, the Pacific to the west.

With its high literacy rate, said to be the highest in Central America, has come a greater leaning toward social consciousness and improvements. Poverty is still a serious problem, but nowhere near as devastating as in her sister states of Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It is a country with a very high inflation rate and a high cost of living, yet the majority of the people live decently.

San Jose, a bustling town of just under a million inhabitants, has an international flavor all its own. As a haven for political refugees over the last 30 years, the city has an open feeling while simultaneously projecting a vibration of international intrigue. Zurich in the forties—a neutral zone where right-wing Cubans set up after Castro took power in their own country, and left-wing Chileans came after Allende went down. North and South Korean industrial contingents ply their trades as well as their philosophies, and cultural centers of every stripe flourish in San Jose—French, Russian, American, British, Albanian, etc. In 1971, the Soviet Union opened one of its biggest embassies in the Americas, excluding the island of Cuba, and the Soviet trade mission is hard at work trying to catch up to the years of American investment and aid to Costa Rica. Six months ago, Costa Rica exchanged consular offices with Havana, opening yet another avenue into its third-world neutrality. Perhaps it was this idea of the "Switzerland of the Americas" that most attracted Vesco—Switzerland was where Robert Vesco found his figurative pot of gold, and in the freedom-loving Switzerland of the New World, he and his family and friends are hoping to live happily ever after.

bringing electricity and water, money spent in building senior citizen homes—the whole kit and caboodle doesn't begin to compare with the money Vesco has spent buying politicians and keeping himself in place as the power behind the throne—or, in this case, the presidency.

On my third day in Costa Rica, I met Carlos Lorena (not his real name) totally by accident. He was staying in the room next to mine at the Costa Rica Inn, a modest *pensione* whose manager was born in Hong Kong and whose clientele spanned the gamut from Ohio tourists to out-of-town Ticos come to San Jose on business. A former telephone lineman, Carlos and several others had been hired three years earlier to moonlight for the Vesco operation. Carlos' job had been to set up the intricate internal telephone network, as well as tending to other electrical needs of the organization.

"I used to be flown out to the farm in Guanacaste quite often," Carlos tells me, refering to the 4,000-acre spread known as Cabo Velas. "I've also been in and out of Vesco's Curridabat compound and even other warehouses of theirs which no one knows about." Lorena, 45, smiled when he learned I was writing an article on the man. "There's a good chance they'll make you an offer, try to buy you," he said matter-of-factly.

It was from Carlos that I would first hear of "the Major," a top Vesco operative whose identity remains one of the financier's best-kept secrets.

"He's about six-two or three, a gringo, wears a crewcut, and, oh, yes, I think he served in Vietnam. He was chief of security and communications for Vesco when my friends and I were hired for the electrical work. He traveled with a Costa Rican assistant, supposedly his translator, 'Poco' Tinoco, a young guy who is the grand nephew of Costa Rica's last dictator back in 1919, General Tinoco."

"One time," reports Carlos, "the Major and Tinoco left me and my partner alone in the warehouse. We were working on some of their closed-circuit video machinery. There were some boxes in the corner which we'd been curious about, and since we were alone, I decided to take a peek. Guns," Carlos says, lowering his voice in the restaurant where we're having lunch. "So we quickly closed the box and never mentioned it to anyone.

"Whenever we were at the farm, I noticed that Vesco had a strict routine of flying out in the smaller plane for breakfast at the *finca*, usually with one or two others. Every time, though, they'd radio ahead just before landing, and there was a standing rule that the workers would have to leave the main-house area before the boss arrived. Then they'd come into the house where the servants would have a fabulous breakfast laid out. Vesco would confer with the foreman of the *finca*, stay a half hour, and then fly back to San Jose.

"They had a special room off to one side," Carlos told me, "to which only the Major had the key. Tinoco and

the other security men were extremely uptight, lest any of us technicians would look inside it. Once I walked by, just glanced in to see the Major sitting at the control deck of what appeared to be a powerful communications apparatus. Tinoco and the other guards yelled at me to get away. The thing was about eight feet high, metallic, with the word 'Collins' on it, and we figured that it had to be a powerful ship-to-shore communications device for Vesco's little fleet."

At the Cabo Velas farm, Vesco has two huge generators for electric juice, an airstrip surrounded by mercury vapor arc lamps, and all the privacy money can buy. When the existence of the airstrip was first revealed in the *Diario de Costa Rica*, several months after it was in operation, Minister of Public Works Alvaro Jenkins asked in the public press that Mr. Vesco get in touch with his office, as the gringo had never bothered to apply for a construction permit for the airfield. The 900-meter cement runway is located in such a way as to prohibit unwanted observers from seeing just who and what is flying in and out of Vesco's private airfield. It is perfectly conceivable that internationally-oriented flights could land there with anonymous ease, avoiding all the dreary paperwork and inspections of normal customs-men.

"When I was working for them, we installed the video-scanners for the residence-offices in Curridabat. These cameras have special lenses which can read your car license plate at over 700 yards. The whole thing works with an alternative battery system in the event that the power fails. And they also have infrared scanners for night vision."

I didn't see Carlos for a week or so after our lunch at the Chalet Suizo on *Avenida Tres*. When we ran into each other again, he seemed a bit more wired, not his normal, jaunty self. "I got a call from Tinoco, the guy I told you about, the security man. He said they wanted to get some new electronic gear, and then he mentioned that they'd seen me talking with 'Steve.' For a few seconds, I didn't know who he was referring to, then Tinoco said, 'Steve Diamond, the gringo reporter who's here in San Jose.' I told him I knew you from the *pensione* here, that you're staying in the room next to mine, that's all. Tinoco told me the Major wasn't working for them anymore, but from what I gathered, they're following you all over Costa Rica, checking on who you've been talking to."

When I asked Carlos whether I could mention this incident in the article, whether he'd be worried about it, he just gave that calm Tico laugh and said: "Go

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ahead, man. This is Costa Rica. This is a free country."

Only a pawn in their game

"Everyone was anxious for me to go down there and spy on Robert Vesco. The FBI, CIA, DEA, as well as the U.S. Attorney's office in New York. But none of them wanted to foot the bill," James E. "Skip" Wilkins Jr., 29, told me in a Tampa interview after I returned from Costa Rica. "Finally, the U.S. Attorney's office arranged for it and I flew on down to San Jose. I was supposed to try and get a job with Vesco's organization and report back to New York on his movements and whereabouts."

Like so many aspects of *L'Affaire Vesco*, the Skip Wilkins case is loaded with plots, subplots, and a many-layered murkiness that may forever obscure the facts. In November 1975, Skip Wilkins, a convicted felon, approached his probation officer, U.S. Marshal Mitchell Neuberger, offering his services as an informant.

"I had an uncle in Costa Rica whom I'd visited in 1974, and I told Neuberger I'd be willing to go down there and find out stuff about Vesco. I asked him to pass it on to his superiors, which he did. Then I got subpoenaed to go to New York, to One Foley Square, the Federal Building, and I went up there to talk with Assistant U.S. Attorney Eliot Sagor and David Ross, an attorney from the SEC who was helping them with the Vesco case." Wilkins recounts the story with a good-ole-boy grin. The son of a Tampa minister, Skip Wilkins is about six-foot-two, burly, with a shock of longish blond hair and an even longer record, for grand larceny, assault and a few other felonious convictions. We met at the Seabreeze Restaurant, just outside of Tampa, where Skip is well-known as a minor celebrity.

"Y'see, the U.S. Attorney's office was hoping that I could find out when and where Vesco was going, so they could nab him if he stepped into U.S. territory. In exchange, I was promised all sorts of things, expense money, a fee, and they said they would expunge my criminal record. Shoot, they ain't done none of that, and I nearly got myself killed."

In April 1976, Wilkins arrived in Costa Rica under the alias of John Turner. He made contact with Alberto Abreu, Vesco's henchman, by telling Vesco's secretary over the phone that he knew an American in San Jose who was spying on the fugitive financier.

"The meet was set up and one of their drivers picked me up and drove me all over hell and back in San Jose. It was about midnight, and finally the car stops on a deserted street, and a silver Mercedes drives up, with Abreu behind the wheel and Vesco sitting in the back seat. Three guys came out of nowhere and frisked me, then put me in the front seat and told me not to turn around, not to look at Mr. Vesco. At one point, I reached for a cigarette and Abreu's hand shot out and grabbed my wrist. He must've thought I was going for a gun, because he clapped his hand on my wrist like he was about to break it off.

"Mr. Vesco talked to me for a few minutes, first addressing me as John Turner. I thought everything was cool, until he said to me, 'We know your real name, Mr. Wilkins.' At that moment, there was a crackling electricity in the car. I thought, 'Oh m'God, it's all over for this boy.' Next thing I thought sure I'd be winding up in some ditch. Vesco then told me he knew I was working for the U.S. Attorney's office, and that I'd been sent down to spy on him." Skip takes a long sip of his vodka tonic and he laughs nervously.

"Since I was caught with my pants down, I had to save my own skin. I said to Vesco, 'Well, I guess I'm under your control now.' And then Vesco said to me, 'Wilkins, you've been under my control ever since you left New York.' " According to Skip's story, he then offered to work *for* Vesco as a sort of triple-agent against the U.S. government-men in New York. The financier told the con-man that they'd think it over and get back in touch with him.

Two days later, Vesco's agents picked Wilkins up at his San Jose hotel, telling him they had some work for him to do, to test him out. "Abreu and Vesco had written a script for me. They wanted me to call my contact agents in New York and read it over the phone. The only problem was that they'd written this stuff for me to say, but not using the code which I'd prearranged with New York. And I told Abreu and Vesco about the code: the words were 'Vicky' for 'Vesco,' 'bananas' for 'guns,' etc." Abreu and three bodyguards then drove Wilkins out to Curridabat, past Vesco's compound and up to the heavily guarded doors of the Russian Embassy, a stone's throw from Vesco's place.

"The guard at the gate acted like everything was perfectly normal, like they knew Abreu from many visits." Wilkins agrees with me that it was an odd place for Vesco's agents to make a phone call from. "Well, we drove through the gates, and into the back of some office building. Then upstairs, where there was a desk and a telephone. Abreu dialed the New York office of the U.S. Attorney, direct-dialed, then handed me the phone and made me read the script. But by the time I was through, the guys in New York knew something was wrong. Then I hung up, and we drove out of the Russian Embassy like everything was normal."

Two nights later, as Wilkins sat watching the Muhammad Ali/Jimmy Young fight in his hotel room, there was a strong knock at his door: across the doorjamb were three uniformed agents of the *Guardia Civil*, a colonel, and two sergeants with submachine guns leveled at Skip Wilkins' chest. The hotel manager attempted to translate for Wilkins, who speaks minimal Spanish, and advised the gringo to go peacefully.

At the penitentiary in the heart of the San Jose slums, Wilkins was thrown into the solitary slammer for 21 days before he was able to send a message out to the American Embassy. "The conditions were unbelievable. I'm telling you the truth when I say it was the first time that I wanted desperately to kill myself. And it was obviously Vesco who got me thrown into the clink. They would only let me leave after I signed a confession—and I'm pretty sure it was Vesco who wrote the confession, or at least he had a hand in it."

Booked on charges of alleged immigration violations, Wilkins was summarily deported from Costa Rica. A big hullabaloo was made in the local press, particularly *Excelsior*, the Figueres-Vesco mouthpiece, showing conclusively "what drastic measures the United States would take, sending five-time convicted felons in their persecution of Mr. Vesco." Vesco had been claiming that the United States was out to get him by "illegal means, if necessary," and in the personage of Skip Wilkins he at last had hard proof—or so it seemed.

"It's true," says Wilkins. "David Ross, the lawyer from the SEC who was working for the U.S. Attorney's office, did suggest to me that I should try to kidnap Vesco, or knock him off. Ross said to me, 'Skip, do you know anyone who's as crazy as you? Someone who could kidnap, or even make an assassination attempt on the man?' So when I went down there, I was 'on my own,' as the U.S. Attorney Robert Fiske later said I was. But the feeling I'd gotten from Sagor and Ross was that the sky was the limit." Eliot Sagor, now in private practice, refuses to comment on the case. David Ross, the SEC lawyer, left that government bureau after the incident and is said to be "hitching around in Europe—Germany somewhere." The role

The smoker's guide to low-tar cigarettes.

With all the controversy about smoking going on, lots of smokers are deciding to switch to low-tar cigarettes.

But which low-tar cigarette should a switcher switch to?

Well, here's an easy guide to follow.

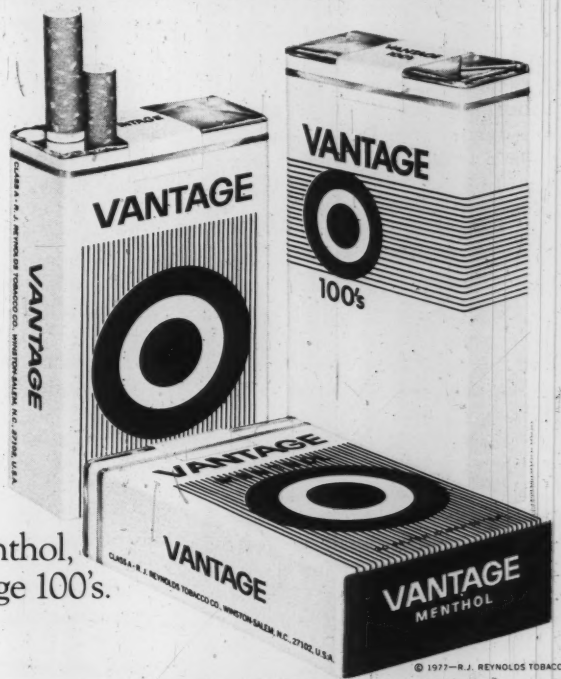
First, there are those so-called new cigarettes claiming scientific breakthrough and hyped-up flavor. Unfortunately there's nothing very revolutionary about the way they taste.

Next there are those brands that promise nothing but low-tar numbers. They're fine if low numbers are all you want. Because their scientific filters work so well, they filter out most of the taste.

Fortunately there is an alternative. Vantage. The low-tar cigarette that's different from all the others.

From the very beginning Vantage was designed to deliver flavor like a full-flavor cigarette with less tar than 95% of all cigarettes. So forget all those empty promises and go with the real flavor of Vantage.

It will probably turn out to be the only low-tar cigarette you'll enjoy.



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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

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FILTER: 10 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine, MENTHOL: 11 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report DEC. '76.
FILTER 100's: 11 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, by FTC method.

of David Ross in the Wilkins episode was somewhat quizzical. At one point, Ross was so anxious to send Wilkins down to Costa Rica that "he offered to pay for the whole thing out of his own pocket," according to Wilkins. Ross was also the one who'd allegedly initiated the conversation about "assassination and kidnapping."

"It is because of the scandal behind this incident," Alberto Abreu told me in San Jose, "because the U.S. government used illegal means in sending this felon after Mr. Vesco, that these two men have now conveniently left government service and can't be reached. There is certainly more to the Wilkins case than meets the eye. Why, for instance, did the U.S. government, with all its police and investigative powers, send this underworld character down here? Why Skip Wilkins?"

"This man volunteered services to us as an informant," U.S. Attorney Robert B. Fiske told me, in an attempt to clarify the Wilkins situation. "I never met the man personally, it was something arranged by Mr. Sagor and Mr. Ross. Wilkins was never 'employed' by us at any time. We paid his expenses and his fare to Costa Rica. Then he was on his own, and he was expressly told not to commit any illegal acts when he was in that country."

Although David Ross had apparently presented Skip Wilkins with the notion of either "assassinating or kidnapping" Robert Vesco, there were no further indications that Ross' ideas were anything more than speculative: no guns were furnished, and the budget used by Wilkins was minimal; in fact, according to Wilkins' testimony, it was fudged through phony expense chits until there was enough of a kitty built up to pay for the round-trip plane ticket.

"In that alone," Alberto Abreu told me in San Jose, "the U.S. Attorney's office committed a criminal act: phony expense vouchers to cover up sending this man down here." But, as Abreu had suggested, there was more to the Wilkins case than met the eye.

"I've been in touch quite a bit with Vesco's people since then," Wilkins told me in May. "Vesco's New York lawyer Foglia has been down here to interview me. They might be suing the federal government for violation of civil rights, and I guess I'm going to be an important witness. In fact, if you'd wanted to get a private interview with Vesco you should have come to me before you went down there. I set up an interview for Steve Dunleavy, of the *New York Post*. It cost him $3,000, though, which he paid me before he went down to San Jose," Skip adds with a con-man's grin. But Wilkins didn't explain to me how it was that he, who'd allegedly been sent to spy and/or "assassinate or kidnap" Robert Vesco, now had the power to arrange personal interviews with the man.

"Vesco: 'U.S. Plotted to Kill Me,'" screamed a red banner headline on the cover of the February 11, 1977, *New York Post*. Inside, Dunleavy's personal meeting with Vesco in San Jose, plus his piece on Skip Wilkins. The *Post* article, however, doesn't mention that the interview was arranged by Wilkins, ostensibly Vesco's enemy.

"I won't say that he set up the interview," Dunleavy told me over the telephone in New York, "but I will say that as soon as I went down to Tampa and gave Skip the loot everything came good." According to Dunleavy, the amount he paid Wilkins was $1,500, half of what Skip told me.

Still the important question lingered: how did Wilkins come to have the influence with Vesco to set up interviews when well-known writers like Fletcher Knebel were granted, at most, a two-minute "chit-chat" over the phone with the big man. It didn't make much sense—unless this arrangement was somehow a way for Vesco to keep Skip Wilkins happy, a form of indirect 'payment' in the event Wilkins is needed to testify on the "assassination and kidnapping" aspects of the incident.

"Don Pepe," Suñol asked Figueres, "if I accepted this offer of 5 million colones, will you still think of me as an honorable person?"

Another gnawing question: could the whole Wilkins Episode have been engineered by Vesco himself, from the beginning, when Wilkins "volunteered" for duty to the U.S. Marshal in Florida? For three years prior to Wilkins' appearance, Vesco had been screaming in the Costa Rican press that the U.S. was sending "CIA commando-style hit-men" after him, but it wasn't until Skip Wilkins bumbled into the situation that the pirate financier actually had a live, warm body to hold up as proof of the U.S. government's persecution against him.

In the Land of Perpetual Springtime

On the seventieth day of the latest scandal shaking this formerly peaceful coffee-and-banana republic, quiet, of a sort, prevailed. The tremors which brought President Oduber to announce that Vesco would be "abandoning" Costa Rica had subsided in the wake of fresh Vesco material. The latest revelation claimed that the astute financier had made yet another bundle, $10 million, but this time at the expense of the Costa Ricans.

According to Stephen Schmidt, *Tico Times* reporter and *Washington Post* correspondent in San Jose, "Vesco knew that the government was going to nationalize the privately owned oil refineries back in 1974. So before they did that, Vesco bought up unnamed bearer shares in the refineries. When the government made its agreement with the industry to buy them out, Vesco made close to a $10 million profit."

When I asked Schmidt over the telephone whether Vesco would be leaving Costa Rica after all, he replied: "President Oduber says he never 'asked' Vesco to leave, he just announced that at some point he 'would' leave. It could be two weeks, two months, two years or twenty. In fact, I ran into Alberto Abreu recently and asked him where would they go if they had to leave. Abreu said, 'Maybe Tanganyika.' So I guess it seems as if they're not planning to 'abandon' Costa Rica in the near future."

Summer is the rainy season in Costa Rica, when the misty downpour blankets the country for three to four hours daily. Like a warm bath, followed by bright, drying sunlight, the rains wash the streets and gutters of San Jose, bringing the countryside's lush vegetation to its full potential. Perhaps the rains also cleanse the memory of recent scandals, leaving fertile ground for newer revelations yet to come—particularly as politically-minded Costa Rica winds into high gear for the final six months of the election campaigns.

"Vesco will be the most important national issue in this election," opposition candidate Rodrigo Carazo told me in April, "and it seems it will be the only way the Costa Rican people can deal with this enormous issue—through the popular vote. Those who do not believe Vesco and his power are at issue, will vote for the party which will maintain the man here, continuing the problem. Those concerned with his effects on our national dignity will vote for the party which will resolve the problem.

"But even if the man were to pack up tomorrow," adds Carazo, knowing full well how slim the chances are, "it's going to take many decades before we can wash his stain out of the Costa Rican flag."●

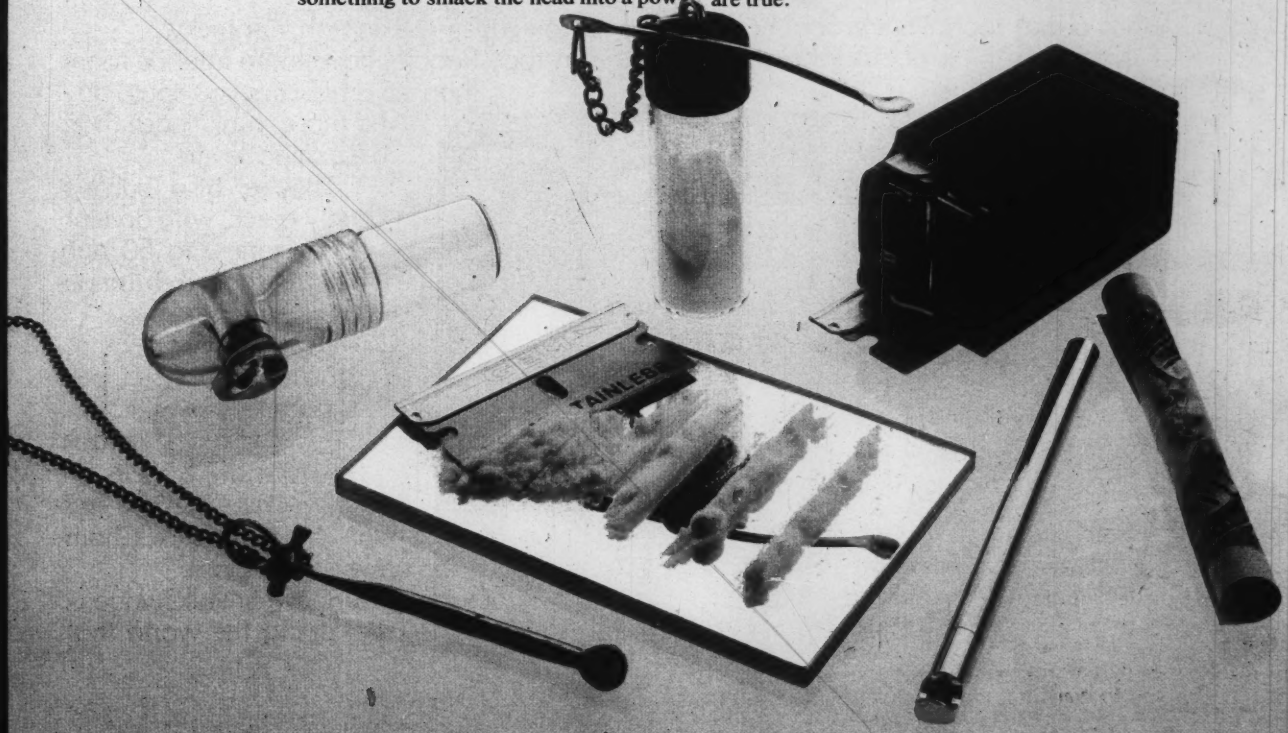
SNOWBLIND IN SUBURBIA

BY ALBERT GOLDMAN

David Hoover of the Drug Enforcement Administration, who ought to know, says that cocaine is no longer the snort of kings: "We know coke use is up, but we're actually making fewer busts. It's just not priority." Today you see the fuzzy white lines, the speckled mirrors, the telltale one-edged razor blades and tightly furled dollar bills lying around in all sorts of places. In the nation's foremost journals of dope hedonism, you can glimpse the future: full-page four-color ads offering chemical test kits to insure against a "burn"; sophisticated chopping mills; super-spy stashes; even scales, for the All-American bargain price of $9.98. The spread of coke from users of wealth and taste to college kids of no particular expectations who pool their money and courage and send one of their number into the ghetto to make a buy (or down to Colombia for spring vacation); to the hippest typist in the steno pool; to American housewives who have begun to brighten their tedious suburban days with little trips to the snow man, is even becoming the subject of college sociology papers, perhaps the final blow . . . Coke is going the way of grass—middle class.

Why? Today's careerist/narcissist is back in the saddle. He/she wants something to smack the head into a power trip but allow it to work long hours at high speed; to kill the appetite for bad food, but not burn the body. The lesson of Dr. Feelgood with his B-12 shots and magic vitamins has been painfully learned. Who needs brain damage? Coke is natural. Uncut, in small amounts, it can't hurt you, a kick that can't kick back. (Of course it's *always* cut.)

The greatest danger that cocaine poses is not to the health of the individual but to his financial solvency. Though coke is not physiologically addictive, once you've come to rely on that little snort to pick up your head, focus your faculties and prolong your orgasm, you can't face ironing your shirt without it. And the cost of the Cost of supporting your habit quickly escalates until you've either got to relinquish the drug completely or find some new source of income. The fact that an $85 gram of coke goes for $10 in the streets of Lima or Bogota is what gets otherwise law-abiding straights into trouble. More than one clean-cut American has learned to rue the day he chopped up his first line . . . The story that follows on page 39, though an extreme example, is not untypical. The names, dates and some of the places have been changed for obvious reasons. The events, unfortunately, are true.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL TCHEREVKOFF

"They just don't like they used to."

We build them better.

Take safety. Underneath the hood you'll find a safety feature you wouldn't dream of finding in most cars:

Holes.

They're specially designed using a computer, so the front end will help absorb energy in the event of a collision.

We also developed such things as an "independent stabilizer rear axle," which increases the stability of the car on rough roads.

And for our deluxe Rabbit, we developed special seat belts that actually put themselves on when you close the door.

Hardly a detail escaped our attention. Even the ignition key is padded for safety.

What about room? It's probably not the first thing you think about when you say "VW."

Yet today, Volkswagens actually have more combined interior room and trunk space than most other cars in their class.

Rabbits are so roomy they're being used as taxicabs in Lexington, Kentucky.

In fact, Rabbits have more interior room than 25 other cars you could buy. And more trunk space than a Cadillac Seville.

They're also surprisingly quick, with acceleration from 0 to 50 mph faster than a Triumph Spitfire.

Which brings us to another subject: performance.

Our Scirocco can take you from 0 to 50 in an amazing 7.5 seconds. And last year it was the Trans Am Champion in the under-2-liter class.

What's more, our newest Volkswagens are among the few cars in the world that

Rabbit

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build Volkswagens

combine front-wheel drive (for improved tracking), fuel injection (for smooth acceleration), an overhead cam engine (for sportier performance), front disc brakes (for controlled stopping), and rack-and-pinion steering (for incredible response).

Do we still sound like the VW you remember?

Well then, take a look at our station wagon.

We never made anything like our Dasher wagon before. With more cargo room than any other wagon in its class. With a plush interior and carpeting all around.

And in our beautifully appointed 2-door or 4-door sedans, Dasher has more room than most American cars in its class.

Yet, with all the changes we've made, some things always remain the same.

We still employ 13,500 inspectors to insure the quality of every car we make.

And much of our work is still done by hand.

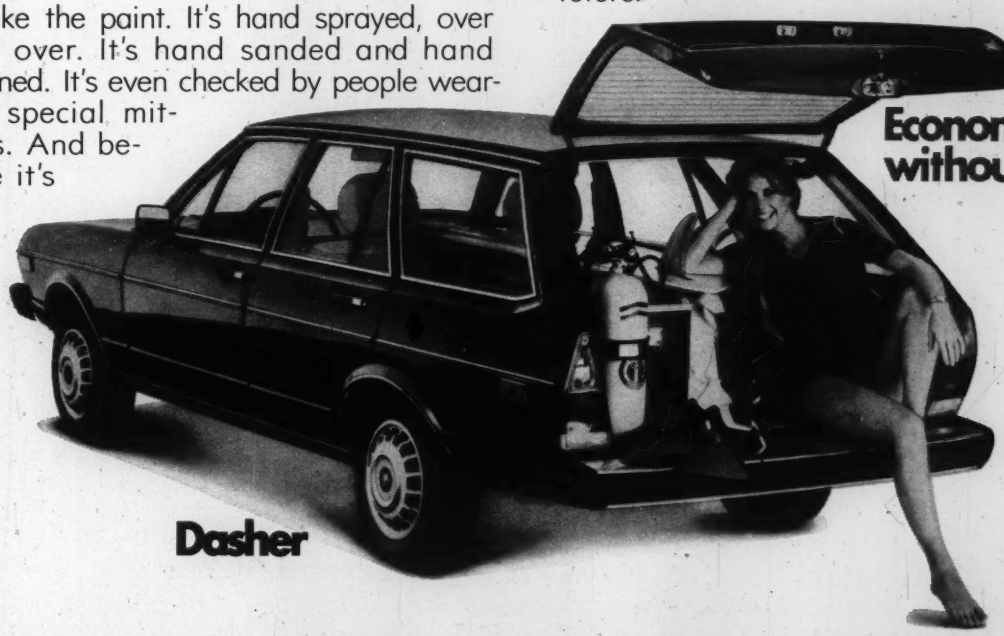
Like the paint. It's hand sprayed, over and over. It's hand sanded and hand cleaned. It's even checked by people wearing special mittens. And before it's finished it's put through 29 individual steps of preparation.

There's also that familiar "jingle" you get putting money in the bank. Because all three Volkswagens get 24 MPG in the city. Rabbit and Scirocco get 37 MPG on the highway, Dasher gets 36. (EPA estimates with standard transmission. Actual mileage depends on how and where you drive, optional equipment and the car's condition.)

Scirocco

Volkswagens aren't sounding like Volkswagens of the past.

They're sounding more like cars of the future.


Dasher

Economy without sacrifice

COCAINE LADIES

BY FIONA LEWIS WITH JOHN LOMBARDI

(based on the research of Craig Baumgartner)

June 26, 1976

Typical California weather. The usual hard blue skies and sun that bleaches your eyeballs. But it was better than stagnating in the freezing cold back in Rochester. Especially at first.

Terri Cohen had moved to the Coast nearly four years before, when David got his transfer. She'd been a little reluctant, but they'd been married for a year and the air was thick with ambition; David was only 24 at the time, but he knew if he could sell fabric in the East, he could sell it in the West. Of course, there'd been no particular *reason* to expect that he'd do better in California, but movement was movement and at the time Terri had been wallowing in fifth dimensional bliss, dreaming about babies. . .

The sales manager of David's company had advised them to bypass Hollywood and the canyons and settle in one of the "nice" western suburbs, places with comfortable names like Brentwood and Westwood. They chose Brentwood. It was leafy and calm. A lot of nice Jewish families. The house was a bargain. They were paying only $475 a month and it had three decent-sized bedrooms, a "conversation pit," a huge kitchen . . . and it wasn't without glamour. Brentwood was where Marilyn Monroe had died.

Terri is upstairs in the master bedroom. She's just finished packing two pink Samsonite suitcases, one purposely half empty. She decides at the last minute to stop and borrow a 35mm camera from a girlfriend. She wants to get some good pictures.

She goes downstairs to kiss her son Peter good-bye. She bounces into the driveway. David wedges her suitcases into the back of their gleaming VW, a special model with custom paint that used to make the neighbors stare. . .

There's plenty of time. The plane isn't leaving until 8 p.m. They don't even need to take the freeway. Lenny is going to meet her on the plane. Lenny takes care of everything. . .

All the way to the airport David is quiet. Finally, as she squeezes out of the little car and the Braniff porter takes her bags, he says flatly: "Do you really want to go through with this?" There is nothing in his voice, and she tells him again that if they're going to split up, she can use the money. It's not an answer, but it serves its purpose. She goes through the electric eye doors and stops thinking about David. Lenny is sitting in first class, where he said he'd be. He's wearing a business suit, but he looks like Mark Spitz. After Terri buckles her seat belt, he takes her hand and presses something into her palm: "Have a Valium, babe." His eyes are closed. Next stop: Lima, Peru.

Terri first got to know Lenny Solomon when she was pregnant with Peter. She'd hated him. Lenny was a friend of David's, a successful real estate broker in Santa Barbara, and also, it developed, a dealer in "antiques" and South American "art." Lenny had come West five years before the Cohens. He'd come from a similar background, ethnic, but solidly middle-class, good Midwestern school, married, two kids, consumed with the desire to "make it." David met him at a business lunch, had a few drinks with him, and decided they were "running on the same track." Soon, Lenny was too frequently in evidence.

Terri would be bombing around the house, up to her ears in baby bottles, crates of Pampers, jars of Gerbers, a feather duster in one hand, a dishtowel in the other, a laundry list clenched in her teeth, and David and Lenny would weave in at the end of the day, looking like they'd seen a miracle. At first it was just grass. Primo Columbiano or Dyno Aculpulco, $75 a lid. They'd flop on the sofa and speak in slow motion, ellipitically, with one of those dumb Neil Young records droning as soundtrack, not making a hell of a lot of sense. Chitchat about what baby did today or how the hyacinths were responding to the spray the nice man at the Green Thumb Nursery recommended definitely seemed inappropriate. David had always been a healthy eater, but soon meals were out of the question. And then the sex stopped.

Tears and recrimination. Hangdog looks. They went to therapy at UCLA but it didn't do any good. "Maybe it was the pregnancy," David admitted, during a lucid interlude. "It's hard to say this, but when we get in bed now, I can't help thinking I'm fucking my mother." The worst part was that

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL TCHEREVKOFF

Terri felt responsible. *She'd* become boring.

Terri tried to go to her girlfriends, but most of them were having their own troubles. Finally, one friend suggested: "Why don't you get high and see what happens?"

Terri tried to suck on a joint that night, one of several that David had left, pre-rolled, in "his" room. It looked like a dirty purple cigar and was so large Terri felt stupid. She couldn't even inhale the thing right. It kept going out. She was becoming horribly jealous of David and Lenny's relationship.

And so when things broke, it was almost a relief. David, the new David, cooled out and playing Mr. Confidence, sat down one night, flipped on the tube, and announced his future: "I think I'd like to sleep with other women." Terri remembers that David had been transfixed at the moment he'd said it, staring at a blonde on *Hollywood Squares*. "I don't want a relationship," he said, "I just want to get laid."

For about a week, Terri felt like she'd been in a car wreck. David began staying away nights. Terri saw more of Lenny than of her husband. One night Lenny showed her how to roll a joint, and get properly smashed. She began doing a lot of weed. Next he turned her on to a little acid, a blast of mescaline, angel dust, poppers, and then cocaine. The best coke. The white gold. It was part of the "art" he'd been making trips to South America for. "This is the best, babe, you're going to get spoiled," he'd said. "Ninety percent pure. Not even the rock crowd gets this." And Lenny was right. The more coke Terri snorted, the righter he seemed, about everything. Grass was fat people, dirty kids with greasy hair. Lenny was a practical success, a businessman who carried a leather attache, packed with expensive merchandise, clean, classy, aesthetic glass vials filled with sparkling white powder, like a doctor. Coke made God and marriage and homesick blues seem . . . silly. Coke was all right.

Lenny would pop one of the little two-gram vials from its holder, unscrew the black plastic cap, tap out a mini-mountain of coke onto a small mirror, then chop it into fine particles with a razor blade; next Lenny would divide the mountain into fine lines, the clicking of the metal on glass making a reassuring sound, a technological sound, something mathematical and consistent, like the clicking of a roulette wheel or the rattling of dice. The coke-snorting ritual reminded Terri of the inexorability of numbers. She felt *joined* to them finally—Terri had always got bad grades in math. The snorting of the coke lines themselves was accomplished with a rolled-up dollar bill, wrapped tight with Scotch tape.

Terri's apprenticeship lasted for two months. At the end of it, she was doing about three grams a week, a "habit" (cocaine is nonaddicting; the "habit" is completely psychological) that, had she been paying for it, would have cost $375 every seven days—top-grade coke retails for between $100 and $125 a gram. But she wasn't paying. Lenny was bringing in nearly pure kilos, 36 ounces at a time, and was barely "touching" (cutting) the stuff he kept for his own use; street level coke, cut with anything from borax to lactose and retailing from anywhere between $65 to $90 a gram, wouldn't have hit Terri so hard.

The first good snort of the day, Terri found, was the best. It took only about four seconds for the fat wave of heat to blast her between the ears; then they'd start throbbing while the back of her brain was being sheared off. She felt like her face was landing on a runway. Her mind was removed, in the control tower; then, out beyond the partition, everything would accelerate. The partition between her speeding consciousness and *her* was palpable, a glass window. Big things out there on the runway. They'd zoom past and she'd feel compelled to follow, taking deep breaths. Got to get out there and do things, *say* something. Except it's getting harder. You loathe your mouth. It feels like low tide in there, with your tongue stuck in the mud. This is becoming a fast assassination of the front of your face. Now it's all breaking open; wild emotions popping like muffler packs. Everything is important, energizing; you must use it . . . Extremely important for the future; note it down. Got to remember how it was. It was intelligent. You feel intelligent and you must stun people in the room with your wit and style. Now they'll listen, even if their noses seem to be growing. No, it's their noses that are paying attention; their *faces* are growing. . . . Words are pouring out now. Nothing's garbled. Sentences are short, sharp barks, stabbing at the crowd with true insight. Stuff you've filed away for years. This is no layman's philosophy; this is true sanity, golden proof, very important. Getting in touch with yourself and sharing it. Suddenly your body and all your energy has broken through the glass partition. You can't keep still. Your hands want to pick things up. Good solid things that need to be examined. Filed away. Memorize descriptions for tests later on. Remember everything. Then it starts to fade. A slight regret. You didn't quite do it. You still take pleasure in your enormous drive, but it's clinical. In a second, it's visionary. Moving away. Only a fool would actually make a move at this point. You light a cigarette and put it down very carefully. Then you check, once, twice, to make sure it's still there. Your hand shakes a little. Leaving your seat would be a mistake. Going outside a disaster. Nobody got the point. The morons are making the room hot. They made you go too far. There's nothing left here. Better get out, the hell with the danger. Get home. This coke must be lousy. Nose feels like a faucet. You can see the goddamned intestinal drip, *understand* the whole respiratory connection; your teeth are frozen and your lips won't come unpinned . . .

One short-range effect of cocaine, according to Freud, is an immediate build-up of confidence. Coke pulled Terri through the period of self-doubt and remorse normally so crippling when marriages and relationships break up. Whenever she felt particularly listless and defeated, she'd snort a "two and two," two healthy lines in each nostril, then go and face her life. One night, David was out again somewhere and Terri decided she'd been lonely too long. Boredom works both ways. She made sure Peter was all right, then phoned a girlfriend. They got blasted on nose, and the girlfriend, Bobbi, called two male friends. They were young attorneys, both reasonably handsome. Terri thought they looked like classy beach bums who'd scraped through some kind of night school exams. She broke open a vial of coke; one minute they were all lollygagging around, and the next they were rolling amongst the furniture. Terri found herself screwing one of these big hunks right up against the maroon armchair, right in front of her girlfriend, who, for her part, had lost all reason and was tearing off the other guy's levis. Terri's mind had left her body. She didn't feel much like a bored housewife either . . .

Terri began sleeping around. Before long, she found herself sleeping with Lenny. Partly it was the drugs. Partly it was the obverse of the drugs. Lenny, like David, was a careful businessman. His smuggling activities, conducted in conjunction with his antique and art import business, added just enough danger to their relationship to make her feel excited. Lenny had it all.

Fiona Lewis is a free-lance writer and film actress, currently in the movie Stunts; Craig Baumgartner is a Los Angeles-based producer.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE CIARDIELLO

She goes downstairs to kiss her son Peter good-bye. She bounces into the driveway. David wedges her suitcases into the back of their gleaming VW, a special model with custom paint that used to make the neighbors stare...

He was always sure of himself, he made her feel like a woman, yet he approved of her devotion to her son, and actually castigated David for being a bad father, for staying away so much. David and Lenny began to quarrel. Lenny moved into his own place in Beverly Hills. Terri began spending nights there.

Soon they decided to try it together. But, meanwhile, Lenny had hit on this fabulous coke scam that, if everything went right, could set him up handsomely in the L.A. real estate business and the both of them up in Bel Aire. The scheme was very simple. Lenny had made contact with a group of South Americans called "The Brothers." They could move nine kilos of coke to him; nine kilos was worth $800,000 on the retail market. All Lenny needed to do the job was $50,000 and three reliable "mules" to carry the stuff back across the border. He would pay them $1,000 apiece. Terri could be one of them. Two of her girlfriends, Bobbi Heimel of swap-party fame and Kay Richter, a tall, beautiful, recent Smith graduate, could be the others. Bobbi, who'd been having marital problems, had been turned onto coke by Terri; she, in turn, turned Kay on, and the three had been making the L.A. coke party scene together.

June 27

Lima looks like Detroit with foliage, but Lenny and Terri have a small table in the Bolivar Hotel dining room and *it* looks like a Christmas tree. Everything is beaten out of silver except the pink tablecloth. Terri is studying a full French menu. It's scrawled across the page in italics and she can't understand a word. Thank God Lenny laid out a few lines before they came down. Coke doesn't help your appetite but it puts a nice glaze on your conversation. Terri is talking with Madame Cardinal, a rich and tremendously powerful Peruvian "society" woman who knows everyone worth their acreage in Lima. Lenny is introducing Terri to the local nobility, his smart friends, who'll bail him out if anything happens. Not that anything will. Everything is tied up, covered up, cool.

Lenny will make contact with the Brothers tomorrow. They are the heaviest dealers in Peru.

The Brothers, unlike the Mafia, are a real family. There are seven of them, five brothers, two cousins. They control the turf outside Lima. They collect coca paste from the Indians, who make it by cooking leaves from the coca plant in small hidden ovens. For centuries, coca leaves have been a staple of the Indians' diet. They chew the leaves and get high. (The coca high has medicinal benefits for them. It staves off fevers and keeps them warm.) The governments of Peru and Bolivia, where coca grows on the eastern Andean highlands, allow this. It is legal to grow coca, but illegal to process it into cocaine and sell it. But government forces aren't particularly zealous in their effort to stamp out the coke trade at its source. In fact, the amount of processed coke that leaves the two countries could not do so without government cooperation.

Cocaine is one of 14 alkaloids that exist in the coca plant. Once isolated, it is a white crystalline compound—benzoylmethylecgonine, amino alcohol base, benzoic acid. Its crystals are long and prism-shaped. Since the coca plant contains only 0.5 to 1.5 percent coke, it takes a hell of a lot of cooking to get a kilo. The Indian who harvests the leaves makes about $2.00 a kilo; finished "pure coke" (90 to 98 percent) costs between $4,000 to $8,000 per kilo; in New York, a kilo sells for $30,000 and that may be a kilo that is only half-strength. Thus, a $4,000 investment can yield a $60,000 profit. Lenny's $50,000 investment, heavily cut on the streets of L.A. and sold as ounces, quarters and grams, could yield up to $800,000.

June 28

The first connection Lenny makes is in a small coffee shop. He walks slowly past a big guy. "Meet me in the street," he says. The guy looks like King Kong. He's swarthy with a bush of unruly beard and a body that badly needs a bath.

According to Lenny, he's the "big brother" who really runs the family. It occurs to Terri that it's odd that the big shot should be making contact in the street, but she figures Lenny knows what he's doing.

Lenny, Terri and Kong go into a side street. Kong takes out a small vial of coke, in full view, taps a little pile onto

THE MAN WITH THE SILVER NOSE

You may impress your friends by whipping out your vial of cocaine and casually referring to it as "girl," "lady," "nose," "snow," "blow" or "superblow," but your dealer has you pegged as a jerk, especially if you're paying $100 a gram. What you are buying is at best 40 percent coke, and may be as much as 90 percent *not* coke. These are some of the things you are probably snorting up:

Lactose (milk sugar) or **dextrose**: a fairly common, sweet-tasting cut.
Good points—it's basically harmless.
Bad points—it dulls the cocaine and causes excessive postnasal drip, which many novices wrongly assume to be a sign that the stuff is really good.

Mannitol: a mild Italian baby laxative, frequently used.
Good points—it keeps you regular.
Bad points—it weighs a lot.

Inositol: *the* cut for the health crowd, a vitamin B compound.
Good points—reportedly prevents baldness and constipation.
Bad points—causes even more drip than lactose

Procaine (Novocaine), **Lidocaine**: local anesthetics which numb the tongue and gums, producing a freeze, which is another mythical sign of good coke.
Good points—great for toothache.
Bad points—may cause dangerous reaction in allergic users and, if one is stupid enough to inject it, can cause death.

Methamphetamine, Benzedrine, Dexedrine (speed): sometimes used to resurrect cocaine that has been stepped on too often; if you're still up a few hours after snorting, you're on speed.
Good points—none.
Bad points—it burns your nose (nope, that doesn't mean it's good coke either) and just generally hastens your demise.

Quinine: a heroin adulterant rarely found in cocaine.
Good points—ha!
Bad points—it causes ringing in the ears, impaired vision, burned nasal passages, headache and nausea.

Other cuts: boric acid, borax, baking soda, salt crystals—in short, anything that's white, powdery and easily available.

How to tell

If you're buying by the gram you'll look pretty ridiculous testing for impurities—just take for granted that they're there in abundance.
When buying quantity, though, you are obliged to test it—you are inviting a ripoff if you don't. D-ometers, easily available in any head shop, provide a simple purity test (the bluer the solution, the purer the coke), but a small glass of Clorox is more than adequate.

Cocaine sits on the surface of the Clorox for about ten seconds, then dissolves in long milky trails to the bottom, leaving an oil spot on the surface. The cutting agents react differently: lactose falls quickly to the bottom, then lays there in tiny grains; dextrose fizzes slightly and then acts like lactose; mannitol goes directly to the bottom and forms a cloudy residue; inositol particles that don't disappear remain as a grainy residue on the surface and bottom. Beware of all shades of red—procaine sinks immediately and turns bright red or orange, speed forms pink trails to the bottom and quinine bursts violently on the surface and forms a red dot.
Cocaine Consumer's Handbook, by David Lee (And/Or Press, Berkeley, CA, $4.95), is full of this kind of information and is a worthwhile investment.

Think about this

Coke goes for $75-$125 a gram, and $1,200-$1,800 an ounce (28.35 grams). Instead of buying one gram of cocaine you could: see 25 movies, buy 20 record albums, play 800 games of pinball, or buy 2 ounces of really good grass. Two grams of coke could get you 25 cases of beer, 4 good pairs of shoes, or 3 shares of AT&T. (If you do two grams a month, you could be living in twice as nice an apartment.) Three grams could be a weekend in Bermuda, four could be a color TV, and twenty could be a Sony Betamax. Looking at it from a less selfish angle, the money you spend on two grams of cocaine could provide a foster child with milk, food, medical and dental supplies and toys for an entire year. You can have any of these things, or you can get high for 20 minutes.

—Paul Slansky

the side of his knuckle and whips it smartly up Lenny's nose. Terri is looking for any sign of police. There are none. Lenny says the only cops are the undercover boys, called PIPs, Peruvian International Police. They wear shabby civilian clothes and Lenny can spot one at a hundred yards.

King Kong and Lenny exchange an elated smirk and shake hands.

Bobbi and Kay took an earlier plane and are installed in a not-so-plush tropical hotel downtown, trying to keep expenses down. They are flipping around the sweltering town, bombed out of their brains on coke. Lenny and Terri are registered as husband and wife at the Bolivar. They go to pay the girls a visit.

Bobbi is a redhead, skinnier and sexier than she'd been two months ago, before she got into coke. Kay is sitting on the bed, her skirt hiked up nearly to her crotch, snorting from a mirror and telling Lenny, in her proper Smithie accent, how this is the first time she hasn't been bored since she was nine years old.

Lenny laughs and takes two "packs" out of his attache. They are plastic and look and fit like girdles; they hold up to three kilos apiece. The girls will strap them on and walk through customs, hopefully undetected. "You wanna try them?" Lenny asks.

Both Bobbi and Kay whip off their skirts and begin struggling into the packs. Lenny is staring at Kay's long legs. "We've all changed in a lot of ways," Terri thinks.

June 29

The plan: Lenny will meet with the Brothers, sample the stuff, make the transaction, then leave. He will attend to some legitimate business in Colombia, then fly back to L. A. clean and wait for the girls to come in. (To customs agents women are less suspect than men.)

There was nothing to do until Lenny left. King Kong had given Lenny a handful of *muestras*, gratis packets of coke, so together with the two ounces they'd come in with, all four are able to fly pretty high. The three girls go out and buy Peruvian blankets, baskets and cheap silver jewelry. They flirt with the young men, who follow them like dog packs. Everything is fine. It seems like a paid vacation.

June 30

Terri is lounging, spread-eagle on one of two chunky European four-posters in the Bolivar. Lenny is in the living room having a meeting. A stranger has arrived with King Kong, someone Lenny doesn't know. There is a lot of high-

pitched whining in Spanish. It goes on for about an hour. Then the voices get louder and Terri hears Lenny shouting. "What the hell. . ." and "Shit, man!" Finally Kong leaves.

Lenny comes in looking like he's been hit by a firehose.

"Delays," he says blankly. "One of their ovens has blown up. They're going to have to get some new stuff. We'll have to wait."

What can he do. The Brothers' story may be plausible, but since they control plenty of ovens, Lenny doesn't quite buy the delay. What if they're dealing with someone else? Someone who'll pay a higher price? He has no way of checking. And he has no connections big enough to supply the weight he wants. Lenny can't stand being taken for a ride. He snorts a little of the "superblow" King Kong left, but still smells a rat.

July 1

You can cut the tension with a machete. Lenny's ulcer, which hasn't bothered him for years, is giving him trouble. He can't eat and he's snorting too much. He was supposed to leave today. With the two hotel rooms, meals and getting around, profits are being cut already. Everything has to go according to plan. He's got buyers back in the States, and they're not patient men.

July 2

Terri wakes up to find Lenny retching. He can hardly speak. He keeps hammering his ribs, clutching his stomach and gagging. Terri has to call a doctor. Later, Lenny explains that he called Kong and was told he "wasn't in."

July 3

Lenny is truly sick. He keeps murmuring that no one has experienced what Terri has with him. He wants her to know he trusts her. They haven't had any sex since they've been in Lima. Still, they've been doing about 20 lines of coke a day and it's impossible to sleep.

July 4

Seven days and absolutely nothing has happened. This is only supposed to be a ten-day to two-week trip. King Kong keeps stalling. Lenny is staying in bed. Terri takes a taxi to Bobbi and Kay's hotel. They're looning around, chopping up crystals with razor blades and vacuuming it straight up their noses. They figure they'll check out the night life. What the hell. Terri has her doubts, but figures it might be good for morale. She has the $50,000 strapped around her waist in an army surplus moneybelt.

Terri notices that Bobbi is starting to show the coke. So far Kay is still all right. They hit a few bars, do a little dancing, and blow about a gram.

Terri is late getting back to the Bolivar. She's ripped out of her brain and naturally there isn't a taxi within ten miles. She feels fine but notices she's weaving. Then she notices someone is behind her. He's *right* behind her. She thinks maybe he's going to throw her in the gutter and rape her, but she's even more worried about the money belt. For a second, she can't remember where the hotel is. Suddenly it looms ahead of her. She manages to throw herself into the lobby, terrified. The place is so damn big she can't remember which staircase leads to the room. There are four. She's stuck. She had always automatically followed Lenny. She'd never paid attention. And there are all these colors jumping around in front of her eyes.

She tries the first staircase. Except he's there, the guy from the street. Right behind her. She knows it's one of those people: the PIPs. He's not even trying to look like a human being. She's sweating all over. Her hair is sticking to her face and the money belt feels like armor. She runs down the corridor and he's still there. And it's the wrong corridor. She can't find the room. Terri's got to go back down the stairs, right past him. He's not even pretending to be a resident. She has to pass him. She looks him in the face, scared to death, and says, "Well, I guess I'm on the wrong floor." And he doesn't move. He just stands there. She starts to run down the stairs. He's following her, but she outruns him. Past reception, toward the door, then whoops, whoops, she spots the right staircase and tears up it. She turns left on the second floor and her room is the third one down—miraculously, it's unlocked. She bursts through the doorway. She's lost the guy.

Lenny props himself up and stares. "What happened?" he says weakly. She explains calmly that she thought, just thought, someone might be following her.

"Is it all right now?"

"Sure," she says. "I just imagined it." Because Lenny looks so pathetic, so sick. They do a little blow, and for the first time, it really dawns on Terri that she could spend a few years in the slammer for her little adventure.

July 5

Lenny has to scrape himself out of bed. The show must go on. He calls the Brothers, arranges to meet them in the same street, near the coffee shop. He limps out and there they are. Three of them, chattering with explanations. Some of their Indians have been screwing up; one guy tried to rip them off . . .

"We need a little more time," Kong says.

"How long?" asks Lenny.

"At least a day," Kong says, handing over two tightly sealed packages of unbelievable, mind-blowing "nose freezer"—90 percent pure.

"Okay," says Lenny.

"Okay, Mañana. . ."

Meanwhile, downtown, Bobbi and Kay are flinging themselves around like go-go girls in Vegas. All their waking hours are spent devouring the occupants of the Americana Hotel. A military academy of Canadian soldiers is passing through Lima, and Bobbi and Kay are doing their best to pass through them. They manage to take on the entire Academy. The soldiers can't believe their luck.

July 6

Lenny has to leave. He's been in Peru for eight days instead of three, and he's sick as a dog and not getting better. Madame Cardinal keeps dropping by with words of encouragement. Somehow, Terri doesn't trust her. Then Madame Cardinal volunteers to speak to Kong herself. Lenny and Terri watch her breathlessly. Rapid Spanish, a pause, and Madame covers the phone with her hand: "He says the stuff can't be ready after all, but definitely tomorrow. I believe them. I'll do the deal if you want me to." Lenny looks stricken, but decides he has no choice. He *knows* Madame Cardinal. She won't screw him. She doesn't need the money. Lenny goes into the bedroom and returns with the money belt. Madame looks bright and friendly. The whole thing is unfortunate, but she's happy to help out. She walks out the door, promising to call Terri tomorrow.

Lenny changes into his blue suit.

"Everything's going to be okay," he says to Terri, putting his arms around her. Then he starts crying. She smooths his hair. Her feelings, she notices, are maternal.

"See you in the States, babe." Lenny goes straight into an L.A. hospital and stays there for a week.

July 7

Expense money is low, so Terri moves in with the other girls. Everyone makes a lavish effort to be up. Terri lets Bobbi divide the last bundle of superblow. Everyone tries to ignore the phone.

Kay confides that she feels people

She's blasted out of her brain. The place is so damn big she can't remember which staircase leads to the room. The guy from the street is right behind her, the PIP narc, not even trying to look human. She stares him in the face, scared to death, and says, "Well, I guess I'm on the wrong floor"

are watching them. Nobody stays in Lima this long. It isn't Hawaii. Nice American girls sure don't. But it might just be the old coke paranoia creeping in.

July 8

Nothing from Madame Cardinal. Terri tries the number she has for her, but there's no answer. Lenny left instructions that he was *not* be called under any circumstances. Too easy to trace.

Terri has a crumpled piece of paper with the Brothers' phone number on it. It's coded. She calls from a public booth. They'll meet her that night. Madame Cardinal made the transfer, but they don't mention if they have the stuff. Terri meets them in a bar on the outskirts of town. King Kong is there with two other narrow-eyed members of the family. More delays, he says, apologizing. A few minor problems. She'll have to wait. Terri is swallowing hard. There is a disgusting taste in her mouth. She's nervous but it's probably just too much coke. They give her another crunchy packet, and also $200. (She had mentioned that she was running low on expenses.) She starts to feel better. Then they ask her not to call. King Kong will be in touch when the kilos are ready.

July 9

The monotony sets in. They all sit around waiting. The coke high isn't working for Terri anymore. She misses David, and Bobbi and Kay are getting wired and impossible.

The Brothers haven't called. The free coke is running out, so no one can get stoned during the day. They save it as the big perk in the evening. The brothers don't call all day. Terri lays out a couple of lines, waits for the top of her skull to lift off, and decides to call the bastards anyway. This time the dialogue has really changed. They tell her the ovens have caught fire again. They can't deliver. Terri starts trembling. She hangs up and starts walking around the ugly cream flat, on the edge of hysteria. She calls the number back and arranges a meeting in two days. She picks a motel out of the Lima travel guide.

July 10

Bobbi decides to go with Terri. Kay stays behind. Let the older girls handle things. She wanders out into the streets. After about ten minutes she recognizes a PIP. She thinks she can spot them now. She goes back inside the beat-up hotel and sits down. She snorts a line and almost laughs: "You've come a long way from Smith, baby."

July 11

When Terri and Bobbi return the next morning, Terri has a sour, crisp expression on her face. She's shaking a little and her voice comes out in gasps.

"They didn't show," she says. They'd taken the bus to the Nova Motel. The motel is newly built. You put your money through a slot in a glass window and a key clanks down a glass chute. There's no human contact, no human

11 p.m. seems like a safe time to fly; the girls arrive an hour before takeoff. "Sorry ladies," the grubby little man in uniform says, "the flight is fully booked"; Kay goes into catatonic shock. Bobbi starts crying again. Terri stays cool

voice. Just a high-pitched electronic whine telling you where to go. They took an elevator to a room. They waited all night and nothing happened. Terri snorted a few blasts to keep awake. When Bobbi fell asleep, she really felt frightened for the first time.

July 12

Terri's furious. When she cools down she puts in a call to the Brothers. Their phone is out of order. Now, no one can stand it. The room is caving in on all of them. They're terrified because they know the PIPs are watching. Also, the locals are showing far too many teeth. Little creeps are leering and saying "Buenos dias" too often. They'll have to move.

July 13

Terri tries to call the Brothers at regular intervals. The phone's still out of order. Terri is thinking about Peter. No one is supposed to make calls out of the country—Lenny's rule—but she keeps thinking about him. She should have been back by now.

July 14

The Brothers' phone is still out of order. Bobbi is on the verge of collapse. Kay has stopped talking. Terri is trying to be rational. None of them dare go outside. They make sandwiches with whatever they can get the *pensione* to sell them. They are all on some kind of paranoid high. That night, with a wave of sanity, they decide to fly to Guayaquil in Equador. It's just over the border, not too far.

July 15

Terri calls. Miraculously, the phone's been put back on. She tells King Kong they're leaving for Guayaquil. He thinks that's the best thing to do. Terri says she'll call when they get there. He says that's fine too.

Eleven p.m. seemed like a safe time to fly. Not as many customs men on at night. At this point they're all too scared to take chances. The flight also coincided with their Lima visas running out. They don't screw around in Peru, they come and get you.

The girls arrive an hour before take-off. The three of them perch at the counter in the deserted airport, holding out their tickets, and a grubby little man in uniform says, "Sorry ladies, this flight is fully booked." They'd purposely bought the tickets from a travel agent that afternoon. And he says, "Nothing else is flying tonight. Everything is closed."

Terri stays cool. Airlines have always made her angry and this is just another jerk with tin wings pinned to his lapel. Kay is in catatonic shock, slumped down on a molded red, plastic seat, staring straight ahead. Bobbi suddenly bursts into tears. That really cracks Terri. She knows she has to take control. In less than 10 minutes she's hustled the manager of the airline to pay for some rooms in a hotel, for the night, in Lima.

July 16

The weather in Guayaquil is hot and dry. When the girls get off the plane, it's still very early. They wait for the airport travel agency to open. They are advised to stay at a nice *pensione* run by a German couple called the Paukers. It costs $9 a day and includes two meals. When they arrive the Paukers are immediately suspicious, nervous about three American girls staying in Guayaquil. Equador is like Paraguay. It doesn't appear on a lot of lists as a getaway sunspot for sophisticated loonies. People go there to be forgotten.

Terri calls the Brothers. She is downstairs in the tiny dining room, trying to get through in her lousy Spanish, and all the time she can see the Paukers listening. The phone is hanging on the wall right outside their living quarters. She gets through.

"One more day," King Kong says. "We'll call you and come over with the stuff." Somehow, Terri thinks he sounds sincere. She feels better.

July 17

Nothing.

July 18

The weather is stifling. There is no news from the Brothers. The girls sit in the room, silent and resentful. The coke has run out and the only person getting ripped seems to be Bobbi, who swears she hasn't got any. Huge waves of claustrophobia and boredom batter

the room. The three begin snapping at each other.

July 23

Terri has about $90 left, plus her return ticket. She calls the Brothers. More delays and more excuses. Bobbi and Kay are tearing around the bars at night like lunatics. At least the night life is better than Lima.

July 28

Terri tries one last time. She calls King Kong, who tells her they'll drive over tomorrow with the stuff.

July 29

The deal has now taken over a month. But today it's really going to go down. Terri has resisted calling Lenny until now. She's been trying to do it right. Terri, Kay and Bobbi wait in the clammy little dining room. It's like an oven. They wait all day. They plow through another disgusting German meal from the Paukers, and a bottle of sour wine. They realize the boys aren't coming. Bobbi gets another bottle of wine and finishes it herself, ending up slumped on the table, burbling incoherent sentences with a few "motherfuckers" thrown in. Kay starts crying again. Terri just feels removed.

August 2

Bobbi has now genuinely run out of her private supply of coke. She's drinking a few bottles of wine a day instead. She doesn't look like the same woman who left L.A. Kay is writing letters to an old boyfriend in Boston and not talking at all. Terri figures what the hell. She rings the Brothers.

"Buenos?" says King Kong, cheerfully.

"*What the fuck are you doing to us?*" Terri screams at him. Then she hears him asking for more money. Terri bangs the receiver down and calls Lenny. He's not there. Terri has to leave a message with his answering service.

August 3

Lenny calls. He has already been threatening the Brothers, he says. He's mentioned their little brother, with no legal papers for the States, who moved to L.A. around the time they all left, to be the Brothers' man on the scene: "I just said to them casually, 'I've been seeing Carlitos around. You know the kid ought to be more careful.'" But Lenny was still treading lightly because the deal hasn't gone through. He tells Terri he'll have to come back to Lima to make things happen.

KIKI DEE

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28	San Diego, *Fox Theatre*	17	Houston, *McFarlane Auditorium*
30	Los Angeles, *Roxy Theatre*	20	Detroit, *Royal Oak*
JULY 1	Los Angeles, *Roxy Theatre*	23	Milwaukee, *Performing Arts Theatre*
2	Los Angeles, *Roxy Theatre*	24	Minneapolis, *State Theatre*
3	Los Angeles, *Roxy Theatre*	26	Toronto, *University of Toronto*
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11	Cleveland, *Blossom Festival*	AUG. 1	New York, *Central Park*
12	Nashville, *War Memorial Auditorium*		

Produced by Elton John and Clive Franks

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PIG-2257

Lenny walks into his large living room to find someone sprawled on his leather couch. Whoever it was, was holding a magnum, because that's what the Los Angeles Police Department reported as the weapon that blew his face off

August 5

Nobody mentions the deal anymore. Terri doesn't know if she wants to wait for Lenny. She is snapping at pretty short intervals and wants to go home. She wants to see Peter. She feels horribly guilty. She calls David and he says Peter's somewhere, staying with friends. "Where?" she keeps asking. The line's bad. "Friends," he crackles. "Staying with friends."

Terri calls Lenny and tells him she's getting on a plane to Miami the next day.

"That's fine, babe," he says. "I don't blame you. I'm sorry, babe." She can hear he's humiliated. He's let her down badly.

When the girls were mapping out their return route home in Lima, they'd gone to a supermarket and bought special sets of clothes. Kind of everyday, travel-bureau trousseaus that wouldn't attract attention at customs.

Terri bought a pair of flared denims and a big white peasant blouse, with flowers embroidered at the neck. She decides to wear it back.

August 6

King Kong calls the girls. Terri won't speak to him. Bobbi gets on with him. He's going to deliver tonight! Bobbi tries to persuade Terri to stay. She keeps saying, nervously, "You've got to stay now. I *know* it's coming now." Nothing, however, is stopping Terri at this point. Kay understands, but figures she'll stick around for the final scene.

Terri waits in line at Miami customs. She feels strange. She's wearing her supermarket outfit. She's not carrying drugs but she still feels guilty. It shows. Terri sees a handsome young customs man with a zealous grin. He looks down the line and sees Terri. He keeps looking at her while he's chalking off people's luggage.

Terri stands in front of him and he says, "Do you always dress like that, or are you pregnant?"

"No, I'm not pregnant," she says, trying to keep her voice normal.

He rips open her suitcase. He throws her clothes across the counter and pounces on her toilet case. He takes out a long pin and sticks it into her talcum powder, then shreds a full box of Kotex. Either this guy hates women or is entertaining some weird personal vendetta. There is a small group of mesmerized onlookers.

"What do you think I am, a smuggler?" Now Terri's icy cool and staring into his mean little eyes.

"Well, do you know what a smuggler looks like?" he snaps.

"No," she snaps back.

"Well, neither do I," he says. Then he makes her take off her shoes and breaks off both heels. He flags down a uniformed woman. Terri is marched into a corridor with rows of cubicles that smell of disinfectant. The woman firmly but politely asks her to strip. She then slips on a pair of deodorized gloves. This is disgusting. For the next ten minutes the woman gives her a good probing for any hidden packages. The woman is obviously disappointed that Terri's clean.

August 7

Bobbi is pissed off. Her payoff for what was supposed to be a 10- to 14-day "job" was to have been $1,000, but now that she's gone through all this, and knows what the coke is worth . . .

King Kong shows up on schedule and lays a kilo of what she presumes to be good shit on her. She and Kay and Kong blow through a gram of the stuff. He apologizes for all the hassle, wants to know when Lenny is showing up.

Bobbi tells him truthfully that she's not sure. Lenny was being foxy. He said he'd fly into Lima and call her from there.

Kong gets a funny look on his face. He says he was going to bring her the rest of the coke, but if Lenny is landing in Lima, he might as well deliver it there. Then he gets a bright idea.

"How would you girls like to earn some real money yourselves?"

Kay, having gotten behind a fair amount of coke, is as happy as a clam. Bobbi is still pissed off:

"Sure," she says.

Kong knows a buyer in Puerto Rico. The two girls can hop a plane, split the kilo between them, land in San Juan, and be back in time to meet Lenny in Lima, *if* they move right away. Kong will pay them $800 apiece and a quarter ounce of coke each for the job, just to show how sorry he is for the jerking around they got.

"Deal?" he says, already reaching for the phone.

Kong dials Avianca. "Two first-class round-trip tickets," he says.

Four hours later, as Bobbi and Kay step out of the terminal, they are stopped by Ecuadorian narcs. Their half-kilos, worn in Lenny's packs, are pulled off them in the police car, heading back to Guayaquil. Both girls are convicted of smuggling cocaine and sentenced to five years, which they are now serving.

August 9

Lenny flies to Lima and checks in at the Bolivar. At first he can't find the Brothers or Madame Cardinal, but he leaves word around that Carlitos could be in trouble if he says the word. The Brothers find Lenny. There are no smiles this time, and no *muestras*. King Kong walks into Lenny's hotel room with four goons and dumps three kilos, half the original amount, in plastic tubing, on the table: "There's your coke, gringo," Kong says. "Be on the nine o'clock plane." "Where are Bobbi and Kay?" Lenny asks. "Who?" Kong answers.

Lenny is seething but he's not crazy. He scuffles around and finds two mules, American college kids, to haul the stuff for him. He goes home clean, but back in L.A., when he opens the tubing, the coke is the kind of bathroom cleanser he could have bought on a bad night at the Troubadour bar.

August 10

In Los Angeles, Terri finds Peter in summer camp, where David had put him. She drives out to the Valley to get him. Peter is standing with a group of screaming kids. He's lost about eight pounds. His hair is down to his shoulders, and he's wearing an odd assortment of winter clothes, sweltering in the heat. Terri grabs him and stuffs him in her car. Tomorrow, she'll file for divorce.

August 11

Lenny looks Terri up. He wants to pay her her $1,000 fee, or give her the equivalent in coke. He wants to make things up to her. She says she'll take the coke. She sets out a couple of lines. They snort them, for old times' sake. Lenny sits there like a bag of broken chips. They have nothing to say to each other. "Those assholes," he snarls. "I'll get them." Neither Lenny nor Terri know what's become of Bobbi or Kay.

August 12

Word of Bobbi's and Kay's arrests finally filters back to Lenny via the drug grapevine. Lenny is overcome with anger. The Brothers have made him look like a two-bit hustler. He lets them know he's not taking it lightly. He calls King Kong and tells him he's calling Immigration: "Carlitos won't be around Los Angeles very long." Lenny is talking business.

August 19

Lenny walks into his large living room to find someone sprawled on his leather couch. Whoever it was, was holding a magnum, because that's what the Los Angeles Police Department reported as the weapon that blew Lenny's face off.

August 20

The Los Angeles Police Department makes a short investigation, but the case is still "pending." The cops seem to believe Lenny's death is a private affair.

August 24

By this date, Terri has sold the best part of the coke Lenny had given her. Cut heavily, it brought her about $900. She snorted the rest herself over the next few weeks. ●

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Announcing

The New Times Photo Contest

From Amy to Afros, from the Sears Tower to solar power, from *Star Wars* to skateboards, these (as we keep telling you) are new times. And that . . . what else? . . . is the theme of our long-awaited photo contest. We are interested in photographs that reflect distinctive aspects of contemporary American life. The subjects can be animal, vegetable or mineral; people, places, things, happenings—as long as they reveal something special about the way we are, circa 1977. Contest winners will be published in *New Times* later this year. Good luck!

Rules: Not many. Anyone can enter. Entries must be postmarked *no later than August 31, 1977.* Photos can be in black and white or color; both prints and slides are acceptable. Contestants may submit as many entries as they wish, but *each entry must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.* Mail entries to Photo Contest, New Times, One Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Pictures will be returned to their owners, but *New Times* assumes no responsibility for damage or loss. Entrants are encouraged to keep copies or negatives of all submissions. By entering this contest, you grant *New Times* the right to publish and reprint any photograph submitted, and represent that the photograph has not previously been published or is not subject to any copyright. Entries will be judged by the editors of *New Times* on the basis of photographic excellence and originality of vision. The decision of the judges is final.

Prizes: But of course. The first-place winner will be paid $1,000 for shooting a *New Times* photo assignment (or can opt for $1,000 worth of photo equipment). The second-place winner will receive $700 worth of photo equipment, the third-place winner $500 worth of photo equipment, and the fourth-place winner $300 worth of photo equipment. The winning photographs will appear in *New Times*, as will any photographs considered worthy of Honorable Mention.

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A convocation of the nation's top political analysts (who participated without knowing it)

By Arnon Mishkin and Paul Slansky

Still looking for Jimmy

He promised us intimacy, but all we've gotten is love with the proper stranger. After all these months, the question "Who is Jimmy Carter?" still hasn't been answered. Sphinx and Janus, he is our first holographic president—an electronic ghost among us. So we assembled a panel of political visionaries to finish our confusion once and for all. Smart? The transcript follows.

New Times: You know why you're here. Richard Reeves, we'll start with you. How do you perceive the President thus far?

Reeves: Jimmy Carter, at his emotional best, has the soul and outrage of a modern Jacksonian Democrat. The Law Day rhetoric and a lot of other things Carter has said in public and private could have come from **Andrew Jackson,** another cunning country boy. There are more than a few similarities in the landed-patrician background and in their emphasis on old Christian morality and bureaucratic reorganization. There was one other thing about **Jackson**. Before he actually took over the country he was what might be called fuzzy.

NT: Chris?

Christopher Lydon: It sounds too simple, I grant you, but just for the sake of argument, try thinking of Jimmy Carter as a **Rockefeller** Republican.

Robert Shrum: Last year, one Democratic senator called Jimmy Carter "our **Nixon.**" Last fall one *Times* man foresaw in him "another **Roosevelt.**" But he looks more like a Democratic **Eisenhower.**

NT: Sort of coming in from the right, eh?

Hedrick Smith: He shares **Richard M. Nixon**'s tenacious, single-minded ambition for political success, and his cool, often humorless determination to contain and conceal his feelings.

William Safire: Richard Redux. Those who still defiantly wear **Richard Nixon** tie clasps can find much to admire in the campaign techniques of Jimmy Carter.

Smith: He has **Woodrow Wilson**'s need for a sense of direct communion with the people and **Harry S. Truman**'s zest for doing battle with political foes. He has General **Eisenhower**'s facility for generating public trust with his easy self-assurance and his politically infectious smile, and **Lyndon B. Johnson**'s almost romantic compassion for the underprivileged and his desire for social justice.

Tom Wicker: **Grover Cleveland** Redivivus. Jimmy Carter is turning out to be the most conservative Democratic President since **Grover Cleveland.** The Carter economic policies have turned out to be not much different from **Gerald Ford**'s.

NT: Well, what about his character? Professor?

James David Barber: Active-Positive. Like **FDR** and **HST** and **JFK.**

Godfrey Sperling: There is now in the Carter approach a strong echo of President **John F. Kennedy**'s plea, in which he said to the American people: "Ask not . . ."

Smith: The energy speech evoked the bold speech of **John F. Kennedy** in 1961 starting the American program to beat the Soviet Union to the moon, and **Lyndon B. Johnson**'s dramatic "We Shall Overcome" speech to Congress in March 1965.

Sperling: Observers here are noting a little of **Coolidge** in the Carter understatement.

Smith: Mr. Carter emerged from his first crisis over the sensitive issue of government secrecy—caused by the disclosure of CIA payments to King Hussein—sending echoes of **Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon** and other occupants of the White House who have defended the secrecy of covert operations.

NT: But who is Carter's favorite predecessor? Whose shoes does he want to fill?

Edward Walsh: During the campaign, Carter liked to identify himself with **Truman.** The sign on his desk bears the words: "The buck stops here." The new President not only believes in the sentiment **Truman** expressed but relishes it.

Smith: His stand on human rights seems an echo of **Wilson**'s crusade to "make the world safe for democracy," his dedication to the environment a modern counterpart to **Teddy Roosevelt**'s conservationism.

Barber: Carter is less mysterious than he is made out to be. Carter discovered as a child. . .

NT: Summing up, we find that Jimmy Carter has the soul of **Andrew Jackson**, the religiosity of **Woodrow Wilson**, the ideology of **Grover Cleveland**, the aura of **FDR**, the office furniture of **Harry Truman**, the smile and style of **Ike**, the boldness of **Kennedy**, the vision of **Lyndon Johnson**, the personality of **Richard Nixon**, and the policies of **Gerald Ford**. Good.

We should also point out that Carter has the same birth sign, Libra, as **Rutherford B. Hayes** and **Chester A. Arthur**, the religion [Baptist] and lust of **Warren G. Harding** and the first name of **Madison**. Anything else? Does anybody else come to mind?

Jeffrey Hart: You are reminded weirdly of **Eleanor Roosevelt**. . .*

NT: Thank you, gentlemen, for your insight, and good night.

*Hart compared Carter to Eleanor Roosevelt in the March 19, 1976, *National Review*. All the voices in the transcript are verbatim from written pieces of the designated. They are: Reeves, *New York*, November 1, 1976; Lydon, *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1977; Shrum, *New Times*, April 1, 1977; Smith, *New York Times*, January 21, January 24, March 5, April 21 and April 24, 1977; Safire, *New York Times*, May 13, 1976; Wicker, *New York Times*, June 3, 1977; Barber, *Time*, January 3, 1977; Sperling, *Christian Science Monitor*, April 21, 1977; Walsh, *Washington Post*, April 25, 1977.

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Skateboard fever

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO WALK THE DOG? DO A TWO-FOOTED NOSE WHEELIE? AN APPLE TURNOVER? IF NOT, YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT 13 YEARS OLD. HAVING PAVED OVER EVERYTHING THAT ISN'T OIL-PRODUCING, CIVILIZATION HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SPAWN THE SKATEBOARD. SINCE ITS FRONTIER DAYS (THAT WAS A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO), SERIOUS SKATEBOARDING HAS EXPLODED INTO A BILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS AND THE NEW NATIONAL PASTIME

BY ERIC LAX

In Los Angeles, a 25-year-old man makes the three-mile round trip to his office on one. On New York's swank east side, ladies with packages from Saks and poodles homing in on hydrants have become sidewalk slalom markers for 12-year-olds riding them. A Parisian entrepreneur makes and sells a thousand a month. A photographer financed a trip to Australia by taking along a suitcase full and selling them.

Something clearly is underfoot in the world. What it is is a piece of wood or fiberglass about 27 inches long with silent-running plastic-compound wheels. The contraption looks as if it is no harder to maneuver than a wagon; in fact, it is more like a banana peel on wheels. It is a skateboard.

Fads come and fads go: the hula hoop, swine flu, Spiro Agnew. But skateboarding is no fad. It is the coming generation's *thing*—its marbles, its baseball. In the last two years, it has evolved into a sport and recreation almost as pervasive as eating at McDonald's: kids in Dallas and Tokyo and Jackson Hole skateboard; so do New Zealand ranchers and Katharine Hepburn and the Austrian ski team.

The lowest estimates for skateboard-related sales this year are around $200 million, a figure that is widely expected to rise next year to one *billion*. There is even talk about skateboarding being an Olympic event in 1984. If you can find an adolescent who doesn't skateboard or at least know a good deal about it, check his ID.

It can be argued that skateboarding evolved because civilization demanded it. Civilization has, after all, paved over almost everything that isn't oil producing. And asphalt or cement is just what you need to skateboard. So kids race on skateboards down streets and in empty rain culverts; they run errands on them and deliver papers from them; they ride them to school and show off their prowess on the playground. And this is nonpolluting mobility, don't forget. Which is more than can be said for the rest of us.

You say that *you* remember skateboarding as a kid: that you took apart a rollerskate and nailed it onto a two-by-four and added a steering column and handle. Forget it. You might as well compare Tin Lizzies with Rolls Royces.

The problem with the early models was the wheels. Steel wheels got bent up, or they slipped out going through turns, or they stopped abruptly (and you didn't) when they encountered a pebble. The rubber-composition wheels of later models wore out practically before you got to the bottom of a hill; the clay versions, like the steel, came to rest against small stones, or the ball bearings they revolved around clogged with dirt, disintegrated, or just fell out. And they sounded like a freight train.

That kind of skateboarding, *that* was a fad. And by 1967 it was as dead as the jitterbug. Because you couldn't *do* much of anything on those skateboards. They spun out and locked up so often that the knees and elbows of riders looked like something out of *MASH*. Maybe if you worked hard you could get your toes over the front of the board and hang ten. Maybe. But you couldn't do a nose wheelie or a power slide, and you couldn't shoot the duck or do a two-board daffy, and, God knows, you couldn't do a lipslide on the inside edge of an empty swimming pool.

Then, the new age! Late in 1972, a young man named Frank Nasworthy figured out that if you took the urethene wheels that were then being used on rollerskates and put them on a skateboard, it wouldn't shoot out from under you in a turn, or stop dead at every pebble. In short, he found you could control a board. And he made a lot of money. But this isn't about that.

Skateboarding à la urethene most resembles surfing and skiing (with the exception that it is much easier on the body to fall into water or snow than it is to fall onto asphalt or concrete), and its basics can be learned as quickly. With balance and practice, it is possible to become a proficient skateboarder in a short time. But like slalom skiing or ski jumping or surfing very large waves, handling the harder skateboard terrains and tricks takes a *lot* of practice, and as in any sport only a small percent of the riders become good enough to make the gravity-defying rides.

One of the best skateboarders in the world is 25-year-old Skitch Hitchcock, who lives in San Juan Capistrano, California, and looks like a 15-year-old doe-faced Mick Jagger. He first got on a skateboard—bad wheels and all—when he was five, became serious about it when he was in the sixth grade, and has

PHOTOGRAPH BY WARREN BOLSTER

been doing it for as much as five hours a day since.

"What keeps you thrilled is the feeling of movement and control," Hitchcock says. "I'll learn a new trick and it will just blow me out; it's so much fun. Why is hard to say. It's like asking a sailor what he feels: the wind and the water—big deal. But it's a gas."

The hazards of skateboarding cannot be denied. Yet the kids who do the most dangerous things say, like Hitchcock, that they are thrilled not by danger but by movement. Riding in an empty swimming pool, for instance, is considered one of the great thrills. (For some of us, watching is thrilling enough.) What you do is move the diving board to the shallow end and set it up there as an entry ramp. Then you push off down the board and onto the pool bottom, drop into the deep end and shoot up the side. When you get to the top, and all but the last half-inch of one rear wheel has cleared the edge of the pool and you are virtually launched into space, you do a kick turn and zip back down to the bottom.

"You want to get just as high as you can," Hitchcock explains, "but you don't want that last wheel to clip on when you make the turn, or you drop and the board doesn't and you get drilled. It just feels unreal. Your body is stretched out, your head is below your feet. I'm glad I learned how to do it; it took a long time to ride a pool. It's the best feeling in skateboarding."

At the Mayfield School of the Holy Child of Jesus in Pasadena, the first through sixth graders are clones of parochial schoolers in the 1950s: girls in pinafores and blouses, their hair tied with colored ribbons, their teeth wired by braces. The boys wear blue, have apple cheeks, short hair, and, often, braces. Everyone is out on the asphalt playground for a skateboarding demonstration by the "team" from Hobie Skateboards Inc. The team is led by 25-year-old Bob "Scobie" Skoldberg, who does the commentary—"my verbal," he calls it.

Skoldberg is proof that there is life after high school. Lean, well-built, tanned, handsome, he is the ideal pitchman for skateboarding—a skateboard slalom champion, a surfer on wheels. Skoldberg, a college graduate with a degree in history, makes a good living (about $20,000 per) from pushing Hobies and from contests. "I only hope I can compete when the sport gets really big," he says. "We might be riding for ten grand someday."

Skoldberg started skateboarding seriously a few years ago at the encouragement of Henry Hester, who himself is something of a skateboarding legend. Skoldberg had spent most of his spare time surfing and skiing "until one day Henry said, 'Here, grab one of these sticks.' I got into the movement and started winning events."

Scobie's Hobie demonstration at Mayfield is a teacher's dream: hard facts coated by a spellbinding display. Skoldberg's talk stresses the need for safety equipment—knee and elbow pads, helmet and gloves—while the other three members of the team (including Skitch Hitchcock) turn their skateboards into magic carpets. They do handstands and pirouettes on moving boards; they do two-footed nose wheelies and tail wheelies; they spacewalk and they walk the dog; they do apple turnovers and board flips and finish, like ice skaters, with a series of spinning 360s. The kids watch,

The La Costa boys, it is said, usually smoke any contest they're in

silently enthralled, then wildly applaud.

Afterward, there is a rush for autographs. "I need this signed 'to Daisy with love,'" one girl tells Skoldberg, who cheerfully complies. Another girl comes over. "This should say, 'to my future wife.'" "Whoa," Skoldberg says.

An 11-year-old girl who has collected her autographs calls over to a boy who is handling one of the team's boards. "Come on, Johnny, get in a handstand." Johnny wears glasses, is freckle-faced and a little homely. Without saying anything he starts to get into a handstand but slips. "I didn't say kill yourself, I said get in a handstand," the girl taunts. Next time he succeeds. Another boy picks up Hitchcock's board. "Wow, this is *hot*. One fast board," he marvels to no one in particular, since Johnny has finished the handstand and the girls are oohing and aahing.

The skateboard industry is one example of free enterprise in full swing. Early on, when it became clear that skateboarding could mean a lot of money, a host of fast buckers got into the action. They glutted the marketplace with so much garbage that the kids were nearly turned off. But it happened that a reverse Gresham's Law took effect: the good material drove off the bad.

"This is still a cottage industry," says Santa Cruz wheel distributor Richard Novak. (Eighty percent of all skateboarding equipment is made in southern California.) "We've got our name established and hope we can hang in there when the big companies try to crash the market." And of course large manufacturers are looking to do just that. Mattel (which sired Barbie Doll) has just introduced a $115 board, and others are close behind. Even so, the hundred companies just can't keep up with demand; everyone is back-ordered. "We're maxed out," says Novak. (Not everyone has gotten in on the action. "The bicycle industry has blown it," says the editor of a skateboard publication. "A Schwinn skateboard would sell millions, but no bike company has realized it.")

This year, the top seven companies in the quality end of the business will have combined sales of at least $50 million, but the year is only half gone and the business so volatile that no one knows for sure how high the total will go. "It's a crazy industry. No one can figure it out. It came from nowhere," says Gordon MacPherson, the sales manager of Innovative Design, Inc., the company that molds many of the wheels now on the market. "Everyone is living in a fool's paradise. You can't do anything wrong if you make a product that holds up. The manufacturers are all very friendly with each other, mainly because everyone's making money."

Hobie, for instance, which started in November 1975 with some $50,000 in capital, is, according to 32-year-old vice-president Steve McAnlis, "looking this year at at least $6 million, and it could be double that."

Hobie is named after Hobie Alter, who opened a surfboard factory in 1951, made a name for himself as one of the best board craftsmen and innovators, and a pile of money to boot. In the mid-sixties, he was one of the major producers of skateboards (usually hand-laminated in surfshops), but this time around he has lent only his name—for a fee and approval of merchandise, of course.

Hobie Skateboards first entered the market selling one standard fiberglass board through the mail. Today, with 2,000 retail outlets and 20 subcontractors, Hobie has expanded its line to 12 different complete boards, 14 different fiberglass or wood skateboard tops, 14 kinds of trucks (axle assemblies), 7

Eric Lax is a New York-based writer. In the interest of journalism, he tried skateboarding, but is happier walking. This is his first article for New Times.

different wheels, 6 kinds of protective equipment, and 7 accessories (nonskid strips for the top of the board, skateboard bag, skate wrench, etc.), plus a line of T-shirts and team jerseys. And there soon will be more.

The company operates out of a suite of offices and a warehouse in Costa Mesa, next to Newport Beach. In the warehouse, a couple of dozen workers, mostly Chicano women, assemble boards and pack orders; in an upstairs office, two young women sort mail responding to ads that offer, for example, one Hobie decal for a quarter. A pile of return mail picked at random is going to: Akron; Waterford, Missouri; Hershey, Pennsylvania; Atlanta; Tuscaloosa; Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Pierre, South Dakota; San Antonio; Willowdale, Ontario; New York City; and Paragould, Arkansas.

Vice president McAnlis, a former marine biologist, oversees the advertising, the demonstration team, and handles new products; presently, he is preparing to get Hobie into the skateboard-park business. McAnlis is lanky and soft-spoken. He has a moustache, although the hair on his head seems to be running away from it. A large picture above his desk shows him shooting the curl of a wave on a surfboard. He doesn't skateboard much.

"There are five times as many skateboards today as there were a year ago," he says. "The Coast and the South were always pretty good. But now the Southeast is going crazy and the Midwest is going wild. One major store used to do $10,000 a month in skateboarding business; now it has moved up to $40,000 plus. Europe and Japan and Australia are becoming huge markets.

"It's just incredible. We've been flying by the seat of our pants. When we first made safety equipment as part of our line, even our own stores laughed at us, but now they can't get enough of it. Actually, safety equipment has helped skateboarding take off: the more mothers who accept skateboarding and the more kids who aren't scraped up, the better it is for us.

"Now we're designing a skatepark with a series of bowls like swimming pools and some long runs. But they will be regulated so the traffic won't jam up, which is when lots of accidents happen. The nice thing is, there is no sitting on the bench and waiting your turn in skateboarding. It develops the whole body, too. Gymnastics are an excellent adjunct to the sport. Once you learn to fall you can save a lot of problems."

Skateboarders, like car owners,

Born a star.

It all started when she was two years old—that's when her father stood her up in the front row of the choir back in Nashville. You can still hear a taste of that rich gospel influence in Rita's songs today.

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want to move up to fancier and more expensive equipment, and Hobie and the other class manufacturers are doing all they can to accommodate the market. "A skateboard's gotta function or it dies," says McAnlis. True, but there is functional equipment and *more functional* equipment; there are serviceable boards for $20 and somewhat more serviceable (and much better looking) boards for $50 and $80 and more. (There is even a $3,000 custom speed board.) "How many people who play tennis once a week," McAnlis points out, "are using the cheapest equipment they can find?"

But Steve McAnlis has grander dreams than mere triple-digit skateboards. "I want to do skateboarding demonstrations in Russia and China. Just imagine," he says, flashing a big grin: "World peace through skateboarding! Reds on skateboards, not rockets."

Every sport has its legendary locale. Skateboarding's is Black Hill at La Costa. La Costa is not exactly Wimbledon or Yankee Stadium. What it is, actually, is a country club development beside the Pacific Ocean. A few homes creep up the hills that begin a half-mile inland; but for now, there are many more lots than homes, and there are miles of Teamster pension-funded roads running down the hills like dark streams. Because there are no houses there is no traffic, and because there is no traffic the wide rolling roads make ideal skateboard runs. So it is there, beside the poppies and wild daisies growing out of the dusty brown earth, that the La Costa Boys assemble every weekend.

In the frontier days of skateboarding—two years ago—the legendary likes of Bob Skoldberg and Henry Hester, Skitch Hitchcock and Ty Page, Gregg Weaver and Chris Yandall and the three Logan brothers, would meet at La Costa and race against themselves. "There's all this unreal smooth asphalt," Skoldberg explains. "It's such a primo area. And it's safe, too. A lot of kids will find a place with a blind intersection, and say, 'Wow, here's a righteous hill. Let's go!'"

The La Costa Boys soon earned the reputation for being the best and fastest skateboarders, and people looked to them to establish the limits of the sport. Today, they are still the ones to beat; the La Costa Boys, it is said, usually smoke any contest they're in.

On a summer Sunday, they start showing up about noon, in vans and pickups and sports cars, lean and tanned young men in their teens or early twenties, "a collection of beer drinkers and helium sniffers," says one of them, but really more a collection of highly coordinated athletes. They wear shorts and tennis shoes; only one or two of the 20-or-so people who arrive have shirts on.

At the top of the hill five or six people practice freestyle tricks in silence. Farther down, three dozen cones are set out six feet apart for slalom races. Someone sets up a timing device.

The people who have been practicing tricks begin to drift down to watch the races. Near the starting line, a rider with a slight limp explains why he isn't racing today. "I got a hipper in the drain;" he says.

"You're supposed to go *around* the cones," one racer tells another, "not through them."

"I never hit cones."

"You just hit three."

For all the laid back (*very* laid back) levity at La Costa every Sunday afternoon, one thing is clear: this is no longer just for fun. There is suddenly a lot of money available to the best and fastest riders, first prizes of $1,000 or $1,500, and everyone here is practicing as hard as he can to take what he can. The fastest slalom time of the day is nine seconds; over a 216-foot course dotted with cones which racers compare to land mines, that comes to 24 feet a second, or about the distance a body falling out a window will travel in the first second. And that is practically sluggish compared to the new speed boards on which leather-suited riders lie as they zip by at speeds of up to 57 mph. "A surgeon told me if I hit anything straight on," says one pro racer, "I'll break my neck." Car doors are open, radios play. Above the starting line peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are served in the back of a van. One spectator, lounging in a short-legged deck chair and working on his tan, surveys the scene. "What a cherry little hill," he says.

Skateboard manufacturers are very friendly with one another, mainly because everyone's making so much money

It is difficult to find an advertisement for a skateboard or a skateboard part—at least a direct advertisement. The subliminal advertising, however, is everywhere: kids in McDonald's and Pepsi and General Motors ads are on skateboards; kids in clothing-store ads have skateboards tucked under their arms; even Farrah Fawcett-Majors escapes danger on a skateboard.

"The institutions suddenly got into skateboarding," says Chip Ashbach, Hobie's sales director. Ashbach looks like a '50s rock star in his late thirties. "What they're saying is, 'We know it's cool, so therefore our stuff is.' They perceived skateboarding as the newest, sharpest thing."

Where one *can* find all the advertising and news about skateboarding one wants, though, is in the three magazines devoted to it: *Skateboard World*, put out by the Daisy publishing company (which also publishes magazines on such high-torque sports as motocross); *The Wild World of Skateboarding*, published by Argus; and *Skateboarder*, put out by Surfer Publications.

Skateboarder was the first magazine about the sport, and it remains the best-edited and most widely read. It is also one of the fastest growing magazines in the world. In two years it has gone from a let's-see-what-happens one-shot to a quarterly, to a bimonthly, and has just now become a monthly. It sells 180,000 copies, nationally and internationally, on newsstands and in surf and skateshops at $1.25, has 30,000 subscriptions, and is adding 2,000 subscribers every month. The average reader's age: 14.

Each issue of *Skateboarder* contains interviews with riders, profiles on teams, a section on "Who's Hot" and dramatic photographs (color and black and white) of skateboarders defying gravity in an unending variety of ways: one recent photo shows a kid making a 110° turn up the side of an 18-foot-diameter concrete pipe. And then there are the ads. Page after page of full-color ads, for boards and gloves and wheels and knee pads and T-shirts and skateboard parks and trucks. Says publisher Dave Dash, "We haven't scratched the surface yet."

"We get letters and drawings every day," says Dash as he digs some out of the piles of paper on his desk. "Kids are really into this, their lives are centered around it. That casts a lot of responsibility on our shoulders. There is no sex or violence, no dirty posters or condom ads in our magazine; parents can trust it. Kids probably know all about that stuff but they can get it somewhere else. A skateboard between two breasts isn't going to help the product much anyway."

Aside from clean living and healthy profits, Dash and other industry leaders are now pushing what they call

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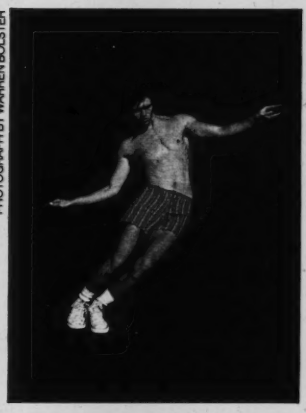

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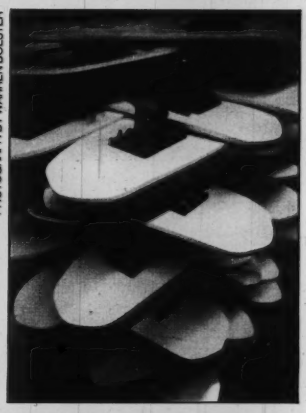

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF RUIZ

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How the pros do it: The idea, always, is to beat gravity—whether you're riding a drainpipe (top), doing a 360° (lower left), practicing downhill at La Costa (center) or making a kick turn out of a lipslide in a pool (lower right)

A skateboard stunt sampler

Nose wheelie: Riding on the two front wheels only (or rear wheels only for a tail wheelie). Accomplish this by putting sufficient pressure on the nose to lift the tail but not so much as to drive the nose of the board into the ground (which will bring you to a halt). Comes in one- and two-footed versions.

Kick turn: Lift the front wheels off the ground, redirect the nose of the board.

Space walking: Your weight is on your back foot and the nose of the board is in the air. Gyrate from left to right and move the board forward.

Walking the dog: One foot is in the middle of the board, the other puts pressure on the nose, moving the rear end 180 degrees and to the front. Repeat, this time with pressure on the tail. Keep alternating.

Apple turnover: A way to reverse the front and rear ends of the board and the direction in which it is traveling. The right foot is on the nose, the left just in front of the rear truck. Get into a nose wheelie and do a 180-degree turn. The nose of the board should then be held to the ground while the left foot brings the tail around. Back is now front.

Two-board daffy: Two boards in a line. The left foot is on the tail of the front board, which is in a tail wheelie. The right foot is on the front of the hind board, which is in a nose wheelie. Change the foot order if you like.

Shoot the duck: Put one foot near the front of the board. Get in a deep knee bend. Extend the other leg straight ahead of the board. Extend your arms in front of you.

Fakie: Go up the side of a swimming pool. Don't do anything. Roll back down.

"safe and sane skateboarding." This is not entirely a case of pure altruism; the Consumer Product Safety Commission, a government watchdog commission, also has something to do with it.

In the last few years, skateboarding has grown big enough to attract the commission's attention—and with good cause. In 1976 there were about 190,000 accidents (vs. 72,000 in 1975), predominantly contusions, abrasions, strains, sprains, fractures and lacerations. While the number of skateboarders increased at least proportionately to the accidents, one hard fact remains: in 1976 ten riders were killed.

In an effort to get the skateboard industry to regulate itself, about a dozen manufacturers and distributors recently funded the International Skateboard Association (ISA), a nonprofit organization housed in offices rented from Hobie. Besides setting manufacturing and safety standards, the ISA wants to standardize competitions and criteria for judging and train judges.

As skateboarding popularity increases, so do contests; this summer there will be a half dozen or more contests around the country offering substantial prize money—and that clearly is only the beginning. So the ISA is also sponsoring a Professional Riders Organization, which helps the racers deal with contest promoters, who until now have been able to set up competitions and prizes just about as they pleased.

Of the first 10 young men to arrive at a recent pro racers' meeting, one has his arm in a cast, one has a sprained ankle wrapped in an elastic bandage, and a third has a sprained ankle in a cast. "We just can't show up for contests without enough money," says Bob Skoldberg. "It's going to be tough, but we've got to stick together. Already we've got one guy to raise his money from $1,000 total to $1,000 for first, then $750 and $500. Otherwise we're just going to bust our asses for 'Oh, nice going, guys.' After all, we're the top name riders in the industry."

The ISA is run by a smiling dynamo named Sally Anne Miller. Besides acting as den mother for young professional skateboarders (she also has three children of her own), she is largely responsible for one of the first community skateboard parks.

"A couple of years ago," she says, "I saw that skateboarding was an up-and-coming sport. So I went to the Community Services Commission here in Irvine [California] and suggested we build a place for it. 'Go crawl under a rock, Sally,' they said."

Well, she didn't, and under her prodding Irvine has since built a $25,000 slalom run where kids can skateboard for free. More recently, the commission approved construction of a $600,000 skateboard park by a private developer, who not only has had to put up a performance bond, but will pay the city a hefty concession fee. And if the business fails, he must return the land to its original condition. Most likely, that will never happen, however, because skateboard parks everywhere will almost surely be what fully legitimizes skateboarding, somewhat in the way that drag strips legitimized drag racing.

Skateboard parks currently are being built at the rate of two or three a week, and that rate is growing. There are perhaps 60 parks in the country today; by the end of next year, there should be close to a 1,000. Hopefully, most of them will be well-designed. "If people don't know enough about the sport, they could construct a disaster," Sally Anne Miller says. "Centrifugal force must be considered as well as the proper cement finish."

Parks now in operation range in size from about 1,600 square yards to five acres, and cost anywhere from $100,000 to $600,000. They look something like intestinal cross-sections; semicircular ramps of varying difficulty that empty into bowls or onto a flat area. It generally costs $2.00 or $2.50 for a two-hour session. Since parks take riders off the streets and require that they wear at least knee and elbow pads and helmets, injuries are being reduced.

It is out of these parks that the skateboard superstars of tomorrow will soon emerge to challenge today's top riders. "There's an underdog just lying somewhere who'll blow your door down," says Bob Skoldberg. "No doubt about it—there are hot guys everywhere."

And hot girls, for that matter. At the Concrete Wave, a skateboard park just across the Santa Ana freeway from Disneyland, I recently watched a 12-year-old girl who could blow down most anybody's door. She practices for hours every day, and there are kids like her everywhere, kids whose boards are becoming as attached to their feet as their toes. They skate with smiles on their faces and they have just what it looks like they're having: fun.

At Black Hill, I met five-year-old Richard West, who had come to go riding with his father. Richard has been doing this since he was three. He had just come up the hill, lugging the board under his arm. I asked him what he liked about skateboarding.

"Going down," he said, going down.●

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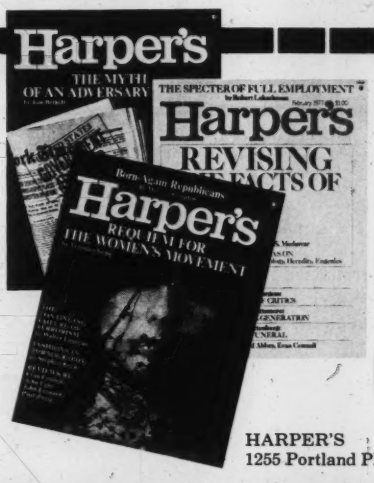

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Smartest robots in our solar system: you and I

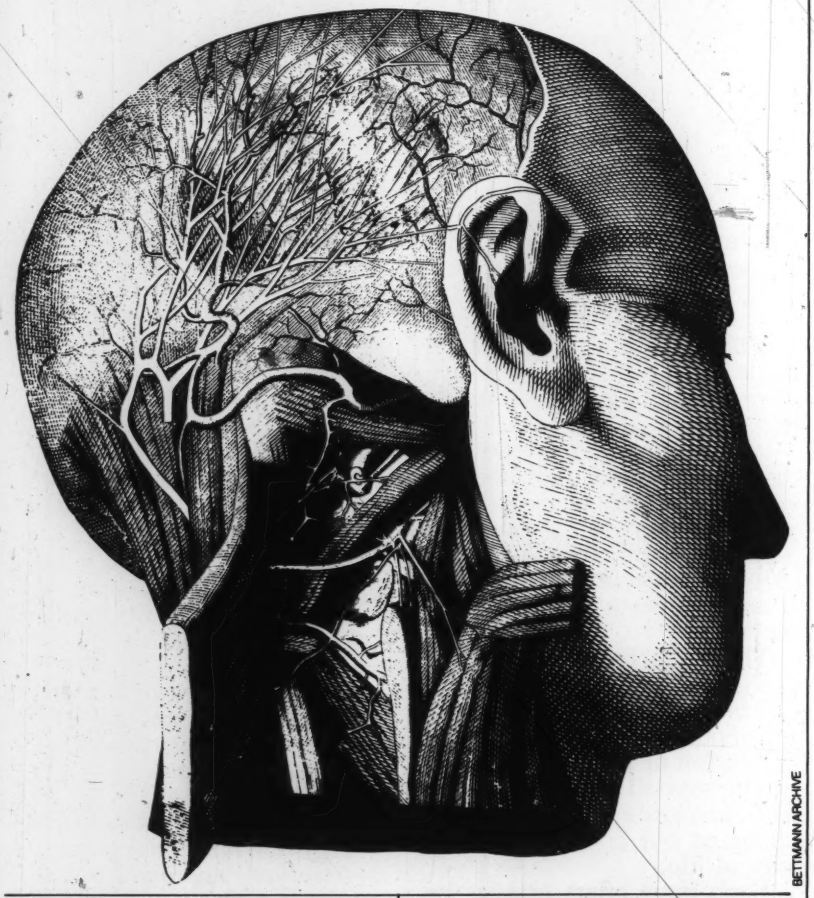
The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence *by Carl Sagan*, Random House (263 pp., illustrated; $8.95).

Carl Sagan is a professor of astronomy and space sciences at Cornell, and served with the Viking Mars Project. He is also an intellectual resource, one of those rare scientists who is sufficiently competent and courageous to break from the prison of his specific discipline and cross several frontiers, into other scientific disciplines and into the humanities. He is, with Loren Eiseley and the late Jacob Bronowski, a paradigm of that fellow for whom C.P. Snow prayed in *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, a fully engaged scientist at ease with the rigors of English grammar and Western culture.

He is the author of the justly celebrated *Cosmic Connection*, a bracing speculation about the nature of extraterrestriality that concludes, without recourse to mumbo-jumbo about Bermuda Triangles or stogie-shaped space Buicks, that there is intelligence out there, and that human beings will eventually hook up with it. In that book (first published in 1973, and now available in a Dell paperback edition), Sagan did not hesitate to articulate the principles that underlie *The Dragons of Eden*: "Although I am not by training a philosopher or sociologist or historian, I have not hesitated to draw philosophical or social or historical implications of astronomy and space exploration." Now he writes of the "exhilarating opportunity to learn something about subjects in which I am not expert . . . for example, the anatomy and physiology of the brain."

Such a confession of enthusiasm and continuing education, especially when it is coupled to the popular appeal of someone like Sagan, is a red flag raised and waved. Scientists are only a bit worse than sociologists and literary critics in their eagerness to maul and silence any stranger happening into their territory without the proper guild credentials, and it is, by inference, this kind of cultural and intellectual tunnel vision that Sagan explores, and deplores.

Sagan's reach and tone partake of poetry, but his vision of mind is austerely mechanistic: "My fundamental premise about the brain is that its workings—what we sometimes call 'mind'—are a consequence of its anatomy and physiology, and nothing more." He has persuasive reference to computer technology, and is at his best when he translates quantity into language. What man can know and imagine is the sum of just so many *bits*, the nickname for binary digits, yes or no, 0 or 1. The information content "of a single human chromosome corresponds to some four thousand volumes" of the average book length, and it was at that moment when the brain knew more than the genes that a watershed in evolution was crossed. To place the matter within its proper perimeters, Sagan reminds his readers that however awesome the quantity of information possessed by the human brain, it is far less than the intelligence possessed by a library of books, which is itself the product of human intelligence. Something of an analogy can be drawn from his reminder, in combination with his ruminations about "machine intelligence." The time is near, if it has not already arrived, when the computer, loaded with such an awesome quantity of man-emplaced information that no single man can recollect the nature of what has been programmed into the machine, will surprise men in its response



BETTMANN ARCHIVE

to questions, and appear to display free will. This phenomenon, like the accretions of a library of books, partakes of a magic that holds no terrors for Sagan. I would like to share his temerity.

One of the most ingenious quantifications developed by recent science, and exploited to great effect in this book, is the "cosmic calendar," an effort to "deprovincialize the present." Evolution is Sagan's subject, and to place in perspective what Darwin called the "descent" of man (from the trees), and what Jacob Bronowski more happily called the "ascent" of man, Sagan offers a model of existence based upon a single calendar year, with the Big Bang starting us off on January 1. By such a schedule the earth was not formed until September 14, and life on earth began about 11 days later. The first primates appeared on December 29, and the first humans on the last day of the year. During the final ten seconds of the last minute of the year recorded history began.

The model has the odd effect of distancing a reader from the process of evolution: it proposes temporal proportions so indifferent to humanity that it bars the formulation of accessible notions of progress. I cannot study the cosmic calendar and believe that my grandchildren will have stolen a measurable march on my grandparents. But it also foreshortens the distance between us, and our ancestors. Sagan stresses the crucial effect on the evolution of the brain forced by tree-dwelling. If a squirrel falls from a great height, it shakes its head, and scampers away. The great mass of an ape, its high and frequently mortal terminal velocity, was a great spur to intelligence. "Our arboreal ancestors had to pay attention. Any error in brachiating from branch to branch could be fatal. Every leap was an opportunity for evolution." The laws of gravity, apprehensions of geometric and spatial relations, a fine memory—without these a tree-dweller would leave no offspring to perpetuate his dull wits.

On the subject of evolution Sagan is especially inventive in his display of metaphors and speculations. (Though in all fairness he is not a patch on Jacob Bronowski; who is? It is nice, and appropriate, that much of this book was developed on behalf of the first Bronowski Memorial Lecture at the University of Toronto.) Though pulled like any of us toward anthropomorphism, Sagan recollects again and again that evolution is a bleak progress, a process "random and statistical." There is a variety of English moth, some light and some dark. The light moths were selected because they could not easily be seen against birch trees by birds that wished to eat them. Till the Industrial Revolution, when soot coated the trees and the light moths, now clearly visible, were selected out. (I wonder if the great gamblers among our arboreal ancestors, apes willing to try that previously untried leap, were similarly selected out, leaving the earth filled with mammals who bet only on the favorite to show.)

The physiology of the brain, this book's principal subject, is enormously complex, and while Sagan writes imaginatively and clearly, he cannot (and would not) pretend to make the matter easy of access. So much remains unknown about the nature of and reason for sleep, for example, or the precise location of skills and intuitions. Much of science's understanding of the brain is gross, and approximate. There is a correlation between the size of a brain and its owner's intelligence, but only to a point. (The size of the brain has been controlled by the size of the skull, its container; the size of the skull has been controlled by the size of woman's pelvis and birth canal. The increasing recourse to Caesarean section may have dramatic evolutionary consequences, or it may not: there's the state of knowledge.)

If the language of brain science is necessarily a language of technology—right and left hemispheres, occipital lobes, prewired information, lesions—its purpose here is not. Sagan always inclines toward the humane application, the human situation, the function of knowledge. Thus, when he writes of "an almost reptilian ritualization of the educational process" he is at once referring to a specific location within the human brain, formed at an early evolutionary stage, and to its actual and metaphorical characteristics: a fondness for repetition, predictability, relentlessness.

His summaries of the fascinating breakthroughs with chimpanzees—they can be taught to speak with sign language and through computers, and to invent words, and to abstract—leads him to a kind of political testament on behalf of the rights of beasts who can think. Sagan perhaps overlabors his plea for better treatment of chimpanzees (and fetuses), but his plea is intelligent, carefully considered, and comes from the heart. And *The Dragons of Eden* (the title refers to that not so far-off time and that not so lost place and those not so imaginary monsters, alive in our dreams and myths and bits of information) is his book, not mine. The singular identity of the author is a crucial point: Sagan rightly makes much of the difference between the right and left hemispheres of our brains; the former rules our intuitions, the latter our reason:

This book itself is an exercise in pattern recognition, an attempt to understand something of the nature and evolution of human intelligence, using clues from a wide variety of sciences and myths. It is in significant part a right-hemisphere activity; and in the course of writing it I was repeatedly awakened in the middle of the night or in the early hours of the morning by the mild exhilaration of a new insight. But whether the insights are genuine—and I expect many of them will require substantial revision—depends on how well my left *hemisphere has functioned (and also on whether I have retained certain views because I am unaware of the evidence that contradicts them). In writing this book I have been repeatedly struck by its existence as a meta-example: in conception and execution it illustrates its own content.*

I find this passage both noble and touching. Sagan is doing hard work, and will take his readers with him. Yet it is entirely personal, a unique signature, like any book. It is not the least redeeming characteristic of *The Dragons of Eden* that in it a scientist testifies to the magical properties of the word and the book. This scientist does so without apology, with exuberance and wit and no little wisdom.

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Four strikes and a solid hit

Sit through any of the bad, big-budget movies that descend every summer like atomic-mutant mosquitoes, and you may begin to feel some stirring of sympathy, or pity, for the craftsmen involved in making these expensive bowwows. After all, you were trapped inside the movie for only a couple of hours; the filmmakers were there for months, maybe years. A bad film can pass through you as quickly as a mediocre Chinese dinner; but it remains, on movie marquees and TV late shows, to haunt the conscientious actor or director. Some day, when he least expects it, Richard Burton will be confronted with his performance in **Exorcist II: The Heretic.** He'll hear his own voice—a voluptuously precise instrument that should be used to deliver Hamlet's instructions to the players, or at least an impressive order at Cartier's—intoning a line that has achieved instant immortality among connoisseurs of fatuous movie dialogue: "Kokumo can help me find Pazuzu." Granted, the man has sinned, as have we all. But would anyone wish a line like that on Richard Burton?

The Heretic is a movie with the best intentions—apart from cashing in on the audience that made *The Exorcist* the third highest-grossing film of all time, which is a good enough intention by Hollywood standards. John Boorman has directed some distinctively flaky movies, notably *Point Blank* and *Zardoz*; William Goodhart claims that the inspiration for his script "came from the ecumenism of Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin, who believed that man and nature would aspire to a oneness with God," as it says in the press material. And the cast comprises half-a-dozen actors (Burton, Louise Fletcher, Max von Sydow, James Earl Jones, Kitty Winn and Paul Henreid) whose talents and credits suggest they should be employed elsewhere—anywhere else. One way or another, *The Heretic* is uniquely inept. But it exposes a number of structural and technical problems that the smart people who make today's movies seem increasingly unable to solve.

CASTING. As Stanislavsky (or was it Roy Scheider?) said, "Intelligent casting is 90 percent of effective performance." We remarked last issue that *The Other Side of Midnight* would have benefited from a strong star in the leading male role. In the case of *The Heretic*, the cast is *too* classy. Actors with fewer laurels and less Serious Dedication to panning for subtleties in Goodhart's pyrite paradoxes would seem more at ease among the million-dollar sets and penny-dreadful plot twists. Some competent B-movie actors might have allowed the audience to laugh *with* the dramatic and theological absurdities rather than at them. But I doubt if even Sonny Tufts and Vera Hruba Ralston could have savored or salvaged *The Heretic* because of its

STORY. With *The Exorcist* as a blueprint, any reasonable hack could have taken the first film's hidden theme—the fear parents have for the changes that take place in their children at the onset of puberty—and whipped up a lurid ghoulash of straightforward SM sex fantasies involving, perhaps, an R-rated version of Vinnie Barbarino. But though Linda Blair, four years after, looks pudgy enough to pass for Jane Withers, and old enough to be ready for some hanky-panky, the movie treats her like a 12-year-old with gland problems. There's no character who's remotely her age, and her communication with the troubled priest played by Burton is mainly telepathic; no March-September romances for our Regan. On a more cosmic level (one that Teilhard de Chardin, or Yvonne de Carlo, could understand), *The Heretic* makes the fatal mistake of personifying Ee-vil in the form of a grasshopper! Someone had to put up the money—$10 million—for this story. Who do we blame? The producer? The studio? The banks? Andy Young? But perhaps we should stop beating a dead Pazuzu, and bestow our brickbats on more respectable summer fare. *The Heretic* isn't the only movie that suffers from excessive

LENGTH. Arthur Mayer, who at 91 is the dean of American publicists, exhibitors, historians and raconteurs, served for some years on the selection committee of the New York Film Festival. Arthur's frequent remark after seeing a movie in contention: "I vote yes—if they agree to cut it by half an hour." At the time, I took Arthur's impatience as a remnant of the days when he owned and managed the Rialto Theatre on Times Square; it specialized in action-packed exploitation films that rarely lasted as long as 90 minutes. But Arthur's suggestion began to make sense as I sat through the nine days of **A Bridge Too Far.** (No, wait: the Allied campaign on which the film was based lasted nine days. The film is a mere 175 minutes.) Despite producer Joe Levine's breezy contention that the

Jacqueline Bisset in *The Deep*: Shock therapy, without the therapy

movie will do big biz in the Orient because "the Japanese love to see white people kill each other," *Bridge* has doom written all over it. A foolish, almost heroic doom, to be sure. $26.7 million for the painstaking chronicle of a military fiasco! A three-hour downer that must outgross *The Sting* just to break even! A movie starring Robert Redford in which you have to wait the length of a normal feature film before Redford comes on the screen—for fewer than 10 minutes! Richard Attenborough directs in the Great British Academic Tradition, which means the movie isn't even awful enough to keep you awake snickering into your popcorn. In almost every scene, narrative force is sacrificed to documentary detail; *Bridge* could serve as an army training film on How Not to Win a War. Maybe meticulous war films appeal to retired generals, and to your precocious five-year-old who can identify makes of foreign cars. Most people are likely to be depressed and confused by this full-dress bivouac into tragic grandeur. But *A Bridge Too Far* isn't the only new movie that lacks

DRAMATIC CONTINUITY. Once upon a time, Hollywood told its audiences not only *what* was going on but *why*. The story made sense, and so did the people in it. Well, dramatic and emotional continuity went the way of the slow romantic dissolve. Movie critic Roger Ebert attributes this to "the disintegrating attention span, the increasing willingness of audiences to exist entirely within the moments of movies." The *Jaws* shark could surface through Don Corleone's bathtub drain—that's okay, as long as the Don gets colorfully mutilated. By this new standard, *New York, New York* is a masterpiece instead of a chaotic anthology of brilliantly realized moments and moods. And **The Deep** is a successful entertainment, because it cattle-prods you every few minutes with a new threat or humiliation. You needn't ask yourself (or the movie) why a gang of black baddies forces Jacqueline Bisset to strip naked as they search for a brooch she couldn't possibly have concealed upon her adorable person; or why Jackie and boyfriend Nick Nolte are risking their lives for a few kicks; or why Robert Shaw goes deep-sea diving in his sportshirt and slacks. Just concentrate on the giant moray eel, and the exploding lighthouse, and the cracking skull, and Miss Bisset's see-through T-shirt. After a while moviegoing becomes a pleasurable form of shock therapy, without the therapy. It's the crudest possible version of

STORYTELLING THROUGH IMAGES. Which brings us to **Sorcerer**—a film whose director, William Friedkin, has actually attempted something honorable: "to make the transitions less obvious, to make the sequences less predictable and to tell a story with less dialogue." If Friedkin's attempt falls just this side of innovative artistry, it's because the characters in his film fall just on the other side of midnight. For the first half-hour (as each of the four leads is introduced in his natively hostile habitat), their motivations range from the opaque to the obscure. Yes, *Sorcerer* is a reworking of the classic French movie *The Wages of Fear*, and one of its points is that these four men, who have fled to a squalid South American village with Joe Levine-sized price tags on their heads, will now do anything to escape their new prison—and that their collective compulsion is more important than each man's individual psychology. So why waste movie time establishing their case histories? What we want to see is the Hemingway definition of manliness—grace under pressure—brought to explosive life on precarious dirt roads and in blinding jungle storms. Friedkin proved himself the master of realistic special effects in *The French Connection* and *The Exorcist*, and in *Sorcerer* he provides a good hour of intelligent thrills. But he's so intent on "making the transitions less obvious" that he works against his audience: just as our antihero, Roy Scheider, gets his truck across a rickety, rain-swept bridge, Friedkin cuts to another scene—and deprives the moviegoer of his expected emotional release. The crowd wanted to applaud these men, their courage, this director. And because the director denied them that applause during the movie, they booed it at the end. Clearly, Friedkin has been all too successful. He's made a $10 million art-house adventure movie.

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME. You may have to go out to the drive-ins, or into the inner city, to catch the summer's most enjoyable movie. But if you can find **Stunts**, it'll be worth the effort. *Stunts* is a high-spirited, no-frills action picture directed by Mark L. Lester; it stars Robert Forster as a college professor who's become a movie stuntman after the death of his wife (already you love it) and Fiona Lewis as the cheeky journalist who wins his heart and his respect while tracking down the fiendish murderer of some of his colleagues. *Stunts* is a behind-the-scenes movie that speaks well for the professionalism of the characters and the filmmakers. It generates as many thrills as the big-budget movies, but you can enjoy it without feeling afterward that you've been worked over and ripped off by a high-priced Hollywood hooker. It's a good story, well-cast and well-told (often through the images); it has dramatic continuity; it lasts 89 minutes. And not once does a character mention Kokumo, Pazuzu or Teilhard de Chardin.

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Music/By Frank Conroy

Going through changes with Jimmy Rowles

There are all sorts of ways to play jazz piano, and the kinds of music developed on that instrument through the years have been enormously varied. Boogie, stride and ragtime, for instance, contributed to the shape of the whole of jazz, but were, first of all, pianistic techniques. One has only to think of the differences between the approaches of various players to appreciate the scope of the instrument—the dozens of ways of perceiving the puzzle, and the dozens of ways of solving it. The late Erroll Garner's simplistic harmonies, with his delicate, four-to-the-bar left hand and simplistic harmonies. The bravura style of Art Tatum, in imitation of the great piano composers and performers of the nineteenth century. Red Garland's fascination with the interval of the sixth, and his discovery of a whole system of voicing chords based on that particular sound. Bud Powell's lifelong immersion in the cycle of fifths. George Shearing's block chords, almost opaque, in contrast to John Lewis' open shells. Horace Silver's percussive attack against Bill Evans' flowing lines. One has to remind oneself, sometimes, that they're all working with the same 88 keys, on the same instrument.

There are a number of small jazz rooms in New York dedicated to the piano, and perhaps the best of these is a place called Bradley's on University Place. Over the past few years a steady stream of fine players have worked the club, and the reputation of the place is now so high that there's a certain cachet to appearing there. The superstars of jazz work the big clubs, but at Bradley's one hears people like Tommy Flanagan, Roland Hanna, Kenny Barron, John Bunch, Cedar Walton, Barry Harris, Jaki Byard and Dave McKenna. The owner, Bradley Cunningham, describes himself as a "sand lot" piano player, but whatever his skills as a performer, he has one of the keenest ears in the business, a great deal of jazz knowledge, and almost faultless taste. He also loves the music.

It seemed appropriate, then, that when the great Jimmy Rowles left California to come east, he would wind up in Bradley's, where he now plays two-week gigs at intervals of a month or two. Jimmy was never a famous man to the public at large. Like Ellis Larkins, he spent years appearing in other people's groups and backing up singers—Billie Holiday, Peggy Lee and Sarah Vaughn all sought him out. His music is not obvious, nor is his style easily recognizable to the casual listener, and for many years (Rowles is in his late fifties) he was more or less lost in the shuffle. He also drank a good deal. Rowles is a slender, mild-mannered man with a sly, slightly removed sense of humor. He draws caricatures in pen and ink with wicked accuracy. One imagines him having as much interest in being famous as in being the insurance salesman he is so often taken for.

But to many musicians, and piano players in particular, Rowles is a revered figure. When he opened at Bradley's, some extraordinary people came downtown to listen—Shearing, Charles Mingus, Stan Getz, Marian McPartland, Alec Wilder, Johnny Mercer, the late Paul Desmond and others, some of them, like Desmond, for three or four nights running. What were they all doing there? Rowles is not a great technician, like Tatum or Peterson, and yet he brings something of equal import to bear, something equally rare.

In one of the jazz encyclopedias, Rowles is described as having a "consummate harmonic imagination." Desmond said recently, "He is the universally accepted authority on changes" (harmonic chord sequences). Rowles plays mostly tunes, rather than blues or jazz riffs, and he harmonizes them better than anyone else, including, often, the original composers. When most jazz pianists learn a song, they learn the standard changes, which are often made up of familiar patterns like Cm7 F7 / B-flat maj7 E-flat7 or C7 A7 /Dmin G7 strung together to state the general tonality of the piece. Rowles concentrates on the melody, on the individual notes and particular bits of phrasing in the melody, and builds his patterns directly on that. His changes cannot be moved around from song to song—they are wedded to whatever melody he is working with. As a result, when listening to him, one often feels that some old tune is being heard for the first time. He has a way of letting the melody out, of freeing it into the open air, that is most extraordinary. "When you go to hear Jimmy," Desmond said a few weeks before his death, "you become aware of people sprinkled through the audience writing down the changes. It has aspects of a master class."

Jimmy sometimes has a large black book with him on the stand. People assume it's his personal fake book—the Rowles changes to all the good tunes. Piano players stare at it hungrily. Bradley once commented that if Peter Duchin had that book, all his prayers would be answered. (To which the irrepressible Desmond instantly replied, "Unfortunately for Peter, all his prayers *have* been answered.") As it turns out, the black book contains not a single chord. It is filled with lyrics. Rowles needs only the words, which remind him of the melody, and the rest is in his head.

Rowles used to sing more than he does now, but he can still be heard occasionally, in a voice that the songwriter Alec Wilder calls "a cross between Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael." Wilder is a great Rowles fan. "Oh yes, he's the master of harmony, all right, but the thing is he gives a tremendously personal performance. He puts all of himself into the music and then gives it to us. Very few people do that, you know." Wilder is right. In his particular genre, in his particular drawing room in the jazz mansion, Rowles is the best there is.

Rowles hasn't recorded all that much, and some of his albums are on local labels, but it's worthwhile chasing them down:

Some Other Spring, Blue Angel Jazz (defunct label).

Fleeting Moment, Jazzz—L.A. (solo piano).

Great American Songbook, Atlantic (with Carmen McRae).

Sarah Vaughan with the Jimmy Rowles Quintet, Mainstream.

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Where have all the Irish gone?/By David Murray

Final Tribute

The deed—and the words that went with it—were as cold as winter rain in Donegal. In a series of carefully coordinated moves, the four most powerful and popular Irish-American political leaders had just taken away from their community its last major unifying political issue: Britain's treatment of Northern Ireland's Roman Catholic minority.

House Speaker Tip O'Neill and Senator Ted Kennedy, both of Massachusetts, and Governor Hugh Carey and Senator Pat Moynihan, both of New York, had dropped the Irish Republican Army on its collective head, denouncing terrorism on both sides and calling for peace in the Six Counties.

The timing was fitting. On St. Patrick's Day of this year, the four leaders issued an appeal "to all those organizations engaged in violence to renounce their campaigns of death and destruction"—and that included money sent to the IRA for arms. This was followed by a strong personal denunciation by Carey in Dublin on April 22: the IRA Provisionals, the terrorists, he said, were "assassins."

Kennedy, who until a few years ago was openly anti-British and pro-Catholic in his stand on Ulster, told an Ireland Fund dinner on May 18 in New York that "while the killing in Northern Ireland goes on, let no American have it on his conscience that his efforts or his dollars helped to make the violence worse."

Within a few days, the London *Observer* published a speculative story that the four signatories to the St. Patrick's Day appeal were planning a "peace mission" to Northern Ireland. When the word got back to Washington and New York, no one seemed to know anything about any such mission. But the four Democratic chieftains began to discuss whether or not it might not be a bad idea.

They went not to their own constituencies for advice, but to diplomats and political leaders in Dublin, London and Belfast. The answer was unanimous: no way. Nothing could be more calculated to inflame the Protestants and to inflate the cherished IRA myth that powerful American Catholics were ready to help their beleaguered brethren than such a visit. It might be labeled a peace mission, but it would in effect be a new invitation to violence.

It was a few days later, on June 8, that the four leaders told Secretary of State Vance that they backed—publicly—the Carter Administration's hands-off policy.

In March 1976, William V. Shannon, then of the *New York Times* and now the new U.S. ambassador to Ireland, noted that only a small percentage of Irish-Americans felt they were "emotionally engaged by the struggle in Northern Ireland." Why, then, did it take so long for the leading opinion shapers in the Irish-American community to take such a strong stand?

In more violent times—in the 1970s' heat and after 1972's "Bloody Sunday," when British troops killed 13 unarmed demonstrators—Kennedy, O'Neill and other Irish-American politicians were at their most vocal. In 1972, too, the principal U.S. supplier of

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money for help (including illegal weapons), the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID), sent somewhere between $500,000 and $750,000 to Ulster. (By 1976, that figure had dropped to $100,000.)

The British government was taken aback by the sharp criticism in the U.S. So Prime Minister Edward Heath moderated England's hard-line policy to mollify the Ulster extremists and Irish-American politicians as well. It worked.

Last year, Eire's then Prime Minister, Liam Cosgrave, paid a visit to Washington and to American cities with large concentrations of Irish citizens. He and his foreign minister, Garret FitzGerald, had the same message for all: American aid to terrorists was "helping to kill or maim Irish men and women of every religious persuasion."

But the message was delivered, not only by Cosgrave and FitzGerald, but by British diplomats and other officials as well. Especially influential was John Hume, the Ulster Catholic labor and political leader who spent several months in the U.S. and had the ear of the Irish political chieftains who later signed the appeal for moderation.

All of these developments over a six-year period have produced a rare event in American domestic politics: a major shift in position by the elected heads of a large ethnic community based essentially on external—not internal—pressures. The Irish-Americans of the great cities did not change the minds of Kennedy, O'Neill, Carey and Moynihan and persuade them to act. That was done by word and deed in Dublin, in London, in Belfast.

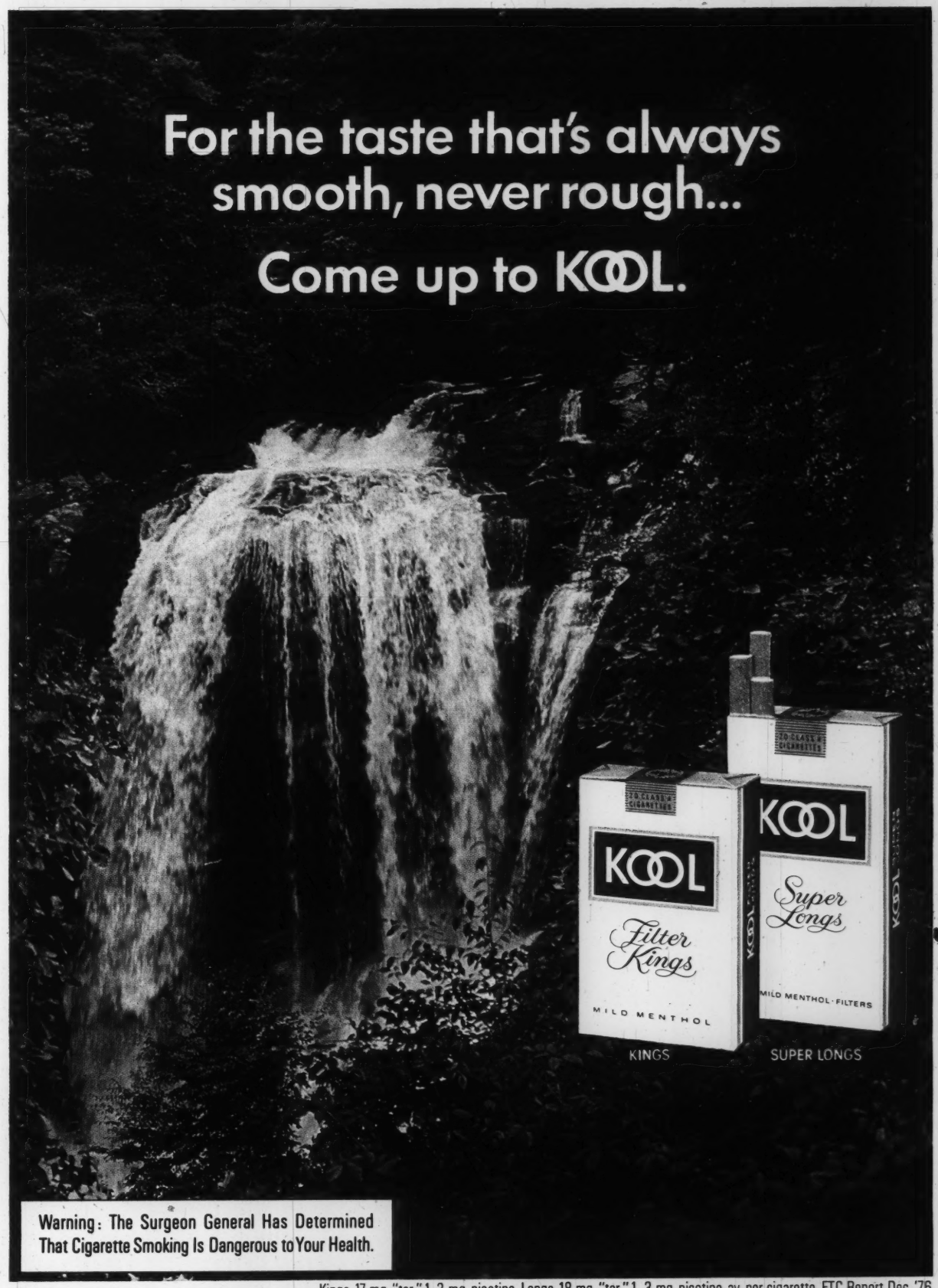
Now what? The chances are the Irish-American community will go on doing what it has been doing for several decades: assimilating itself into urban-suburban America, while preserving an ethnic subculture that tends to romanticize an "Ould Sod" that never was. The "Irish issues" in American politics have become the same as for any other Roman Catholic group in similar social and economic strata: abortion, busing, scatter-site public housing, capital punishment and preservation of the family automobile.

For all that, to the Irish, no matter how many generations removed from Eire, it is still important to be Irish.

In Edwin O'Connor's 1956 political novel *The Last Hurrah*, Mayor Frank Skeffington made two prophecies about the people of his city, obviously Boston. Although the old folkways were supposedly dying out among those a century from the "coffin ships," said Skeffington, "all I know is that just before midnight in Hibernian Hall, when the tenor starts to sing 'I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen,' young tears fall as freely as old."

In municipal politics, said the mayor, only two points of foreign policy were cardinal: "All Ireland must be free [and] Trieste belongs to Italy." But, he added in his second prophecy, "in 20 years, the Irish issue will be about as burning as that of Unhappy Ethiopia."

Twenty years later, that day seems at hand.●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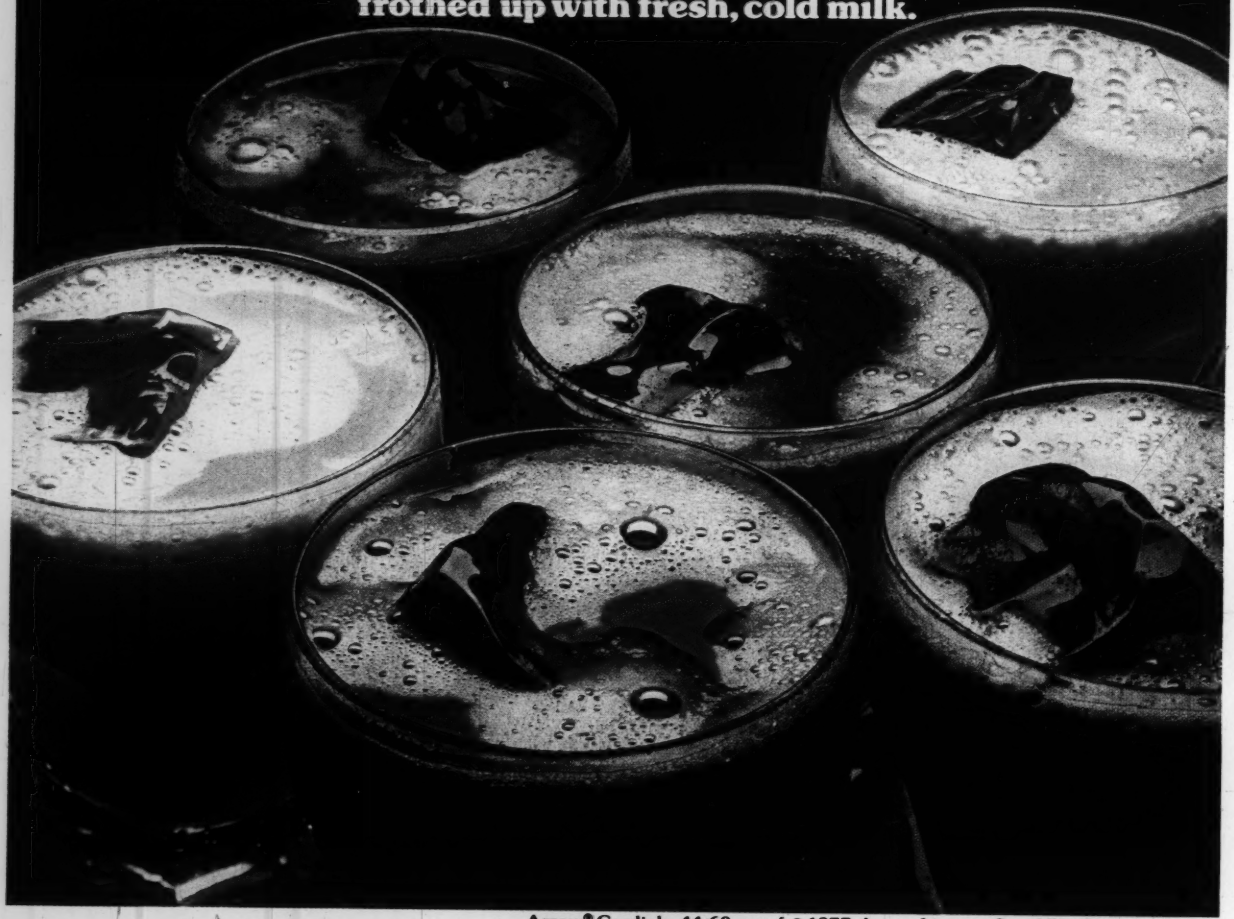

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